

THE IRAQ-IRAN CONFLICT

A Note from Al-Moharer

In response to the enquiries of our Readers about the Iraq-Iran Conflict Al-Moharer decided to republish THE IRAQ-IRAN CONFLICT which was first published in 1981 by “The Institute of Studies and Research” doing so, we believe, will help shed some lights on the present role of Iran in the destruction and occupation of Iraq and its support of the sectarian gangs which were established by the Mullahs, and brought to Iraq by the United States and anointed them to be the “rulers” in the Green Zone, an area of four square miles, in Iraq. The US and Iran may appear at odds, but in reality both share the same ambition in ripping Iraq apart and robbing it from its wealth and distorting its history.

Best Regards

Ibrahim Ebeid,

Co-Editor, Al-Moharer.net

INTRODUCTION

The Arab-Iranian conflict is as old as the history of this region of the world. The historian will not fail to call attention to the fact that the present-day war between Iraq and Iran has broken out between two peoples belonging to dissimilar civilizations, and whose origins date back to the ancient times of Arabia and Persia (1). As history amply demonstrates, the numerous divergences between these two countries are obvious from a purely geographical point of view as well as from the ethnic and cultural traits of their peoples.

The Iranian language is considered as one of the ancient Indo-European languages (2) along with Greek, German and Armenian, among others. The Arabic tongue belongs to the Semitic language group, in the same way as the Arabs would be included in the Semitic ethnic ensemble. Despite their geographical proximity, the differences between Iraq and Persia have always been greater than their similarities. Relations between the two countries were frankly hostile until the birth of Islam and the Arab conquest of Persia. Islam, carrying a novel message, brought about considerable changes in Persia and in its relations with the neighboring countries.

The Arabs settled in Mesopotamia before recorded history. There, they edified a brilliant civilization and marked this region with their cultural imprint. The Arabs left the Arabian Peninsula by successive waves in order to attain the Mediterranean Sea, where they became known under the name of Phoenicians, as well as reaching the fertile lands of Iraq. Among them, there were the Acadians, the Assyrians, the Chaldeans and before them, perhaps, the Sumerians, whose origins still pose the historian problems. In any case, the experts agree on the fact that the Sumerians always inhabited Iraq, where they have left substantial traces. Some writers even claim that the men living in Mesopotamia were the first to use cuneiform writing (3).

The Arabs of contemporary Iraq thus inherited an illustrious civilization having benefited from all those that were to flourish on Mesopotamian land over the centuries: Assyria, Babylonia, etc. Hence, Iraq must be considered as one of the richest regions of the world with respect to both its history and culture. The mountains of Zagros constitute a natural barrier to the east of this country. A new life and a new people are to be found on the other side of those mountains, that is, a people belonging to a civilization which differs from that of the Arabs: the Persians.

Persia, too, had known a specific cultural development. It had its own sciences, its own customs and its own religion, namely, Zoroastrianism. The historian J.M. Roberts writes that the central idea in the Persian religions was the affirmation of the divine nature of royalty. Moreover, "the doctrines in which they (the Persians) believed stressed the existence of a creature, Ahura

Mazda, whose viceroy on earth was the king." (4). He notes that their science, customs and religion were foreign to those of the Arabs.

With respect to military strategy, the Arabs and the Persians also had varying conceptions, as clearly shown by the battle of Qadisiyah. It is indeed at this site that the decisive battle took place, allowing the Arab Muslims led by Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas under the Omar bin Al-Khattab Caliphate to defeat the Persians headed by Rustom (4). This victory occurred on the last day of May or the first day of April 637 A.D. (5). The Arabs were surprised during the battle by the Persian army's use of elephants. Protected within small, wooden fortresses mounted on the backs of the elephants, the Persian archers succeeded in inflicting serious losses upon the Arab infantry and cavalry which were momentarily stunned by a war technique unknown to them. After the bitter defeat at Qadisiyah, having ended with the death of Rustom and the routing of the Sasanid army, the way was cleared for the Muslim conquests in Persia, India and other Asian countries.

The Arab conquest of Persia meant that this country would become part of the region governed by the Arabs, and thus marked the beginning of a history common to both peoples. The situation did not last long. Persia took advantage of the decline of the Abbasids (and thus, of Arab leadership) as well as the overthrow of the Caliphate by other Muslim peoples, namely, the Turks, in order to free itself from Arab control and to assert its independence. As for the Arabs, they found themselves under Turkish rule for a long period that only ended with the First World War. In 1501, Persia retrieved its independence under Ismail, the founder of the Safawid dynasty (6). Historian Philippe Hitti considers the Safawid Kingdom as "one of the greatest and most glorious Persian Muslim states" (7).

The conflict was to again break out between Persia and Iraq (henceforth occupied by the Turks) in a way almost analogous to the pre-Islamic period. International agreements concluded between Persia and Iraq and to which specialists in international law refer in the debate over today's conflict, were in fact signed between Persia and the Ottoman Empire. The most significant treaties were those of Ard Roum (Erzeroum) in 1847 and the Constantinople Protocol of 1913. We have analyzed these conventions in the context of the developments that this book treats with regard to Arabistan and Shatt-al-Arab. To bring to light the true facts opposing Iraq and Iran today, the history of the relations between these two countries must be retraced and closely examined. It is for this reason that we have axed our discussion upon three main themes. First of all, we have recalled the direct causes of the war which broke out in September 1980 (Chapter 1). The historical roots of the Iraq-Iran conflict are then exposed through the geographical and historical development of the region from its origins to the present day (Chapters 2 and 3). The period subsequent to the Turkish occupation has been considered in detail because events which took place then were later to have important consequences (Chapters 4 and 5). The sixth and seventh chapters describe the turns taken by the war.

Even though this book is to be published at a moment when the war is still going on, we hope to have attained our goal of clarifying some of the ill-known aspects of the present conflict. It is also our hope that an objective presentation and analysis of its causes, both ancient and modern, will favor a better understanding of the realities behind this ferocious clash, whose theater is one of the most vulnerable and vital regions in the world.

Note

- (1) In 1935, under the reign of Reza Khan, the name of Persia was changed to Iran.
- (2) Cf. Course on French Linguistics of Professor Georges Matore at the University of Paris IV - Sorbonne.
- (3) Matore G. Ibid.: "The Sumerians invented writing around 3500 B.C."
- (4) J.M. Roberts, The Hutchinson History of the World. Hutchinson Publishing Group Ltd. London, 1976, p. 356.
- (5) Rustom was the head of King Chosroe's Persian army.
- (65) Philippe Hitti, History of the Arabs, Macmillan Student Editions. 10th ed. London, 1974, p, 155
- (6) J.M. Roberts, /bid. p. 430.
- (7) J.M. Roberts, /bid. p. 430.
- (8) Philippe K. Hitti, History of the Arabs.5th edition, 1974, p. 797 (Arabic).

CHAPTER 1

TOWARDS WAR

THE UNIVERSITY BOMBING

Tuesday, April 1st, 1980, thousands of students from all over the Arab world and Asia were assembled at Al-Mustansiriyah University (1) in Baghdad. They were awaiting the arrival of Tareq Aziz, Deputy Premier of Iraq and member of the Revolution Command Council (R.C.C.), who had been scheduled to inaugurate the International Economic Conference organized by the National Union of Iraqi students in collaboration with the Asiatic Student Committee. In the crowd, a young man was waiting - he was Iranian.

When Tareq Aziz made his entrance, greeted by peals of applause, the young Iranian threw a bomb in his direction. Seeing the danger, the President of the Student Union, Mohammed Dabdab, hurled himself toward Tareq Aziz, shouting: "Look out! There's a bomb!" Immediately the Deputy Premier flung himself to the ground, just missing the full force of the explosion. In the midst of the bellowing crowd the student leaders rushed towards Tareq Aziz to find him only very lightly injured.

As the ambulances were taking away the numerous wounded and dead, the Deputy Premier took control of the situation and rapidly met with the student organizers of the conference. Together they took the decision to carry on the inaugural ceremony as planned. However, due to his state which required hospitalization, Tareq Aziz was unable to deliver the speech he had prepared. A second bomb was later discovered in the same area and defused in time. If it had exploded, this bomb would have slaughtered many students.

In the meantime, the President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, was visiting the borderline province of Suwayra from which the Iranian summits can be seen. This visit was one of those that the President regularly paid throughout the country. Rarely a day would pass without his touring a city, a neighborhood, a school, a university or an industry, generally ending up each trip with a visit to an Iraqi home.

At the time of the bombing at the University, the Iraqi president was addressing the crowd that had gathered to welcome him to Suwayra. especially intending his message for the Iranian neighbors, he strongly affirmed: "The Iraqi people do not wish to break off relations with any state unless some state so desires and believes it could endanger the sovereignty of our country or offend the honor and will of our nation... We proclaim to any state wanting to halt relations with Iraq and the Arab Nation that we are determined to combat its interference. .. We are not prepared to give way before our duty and the defense of our principles... "

The opening of the Student Conference at Al-Mustansiriyah went on without any further incident; the Deputy Premier's speech was read to the audience and won the success expected. News of the bombing was broadcast on the radio, and when the Iraqi president

arrived in Baghdad that evening from Suwayra, he went directly to the hospital to visit those injured.

THE OATH OF PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN

The next day, April 2nd, President Saddam Hussein went to the place where the bomb had exploded. Pain and sadness could be read on his face. Beginning to speak in the midst of a throng of students, he firmly summoned Iran not to intrude in the internal affairs of Iraq or the neighboring Arab countries. "Yesterday ", he said, " a miserable agent caused the very dear blood of young Al-Mustansiriyah students to be shed... "The President then vowed three times that this criminal act would not remain unpunished.

The Iraqi people have become an unyielding mountain that they (the Iranians) are not capable of attaining with their bombs or by any other means. Fourteen-hundred years ago the Arabs took it upon themselves to accomplish a divine mission on this holy ground. It is still they who are the most apt to fulfill such a calling for the honor of the Arabs and in the interest of all humanity... Our people are ready to fight to defend their honor and sovereignty, as well as to maintain peace among the Arab nation... We shall pursue this vocation, in the service of the Arabs...

After the speech, the President's threefold oath was considerably commented by the crowd. Nevertheless, people's minds were soon occupied by the preparations for (the celebration of the 33rd anniversary of the Ba'ath Party. Since the ninth summit held in Baghdad in November 1978 at the close of which the Camp David politics were condemned, and since the eight-principle national proclamation of the Head of State on February 8, 1980 (2) in which Iraq committed itself not to resort to force in its relations with the neighboring countries, except for cases of its own legitimate self-defense or that of the other Arab countries, Iraq has taken on a determining political role in the Middle East region. Indeed, this phenomenon has been commented upon by the French newspaper "Le Monde":

Baghdad, which just a few years ago had the appearance of a modest, old-fashioned provincial capital, has become the rallying place of a steadily increasing number of presidents of small, unaligned countries and leaders of national liberation movements of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The oil revenues of Iraq have attained the record figure of 150 billion French Francs, allowing the regime not only to improve the standard of living of the population, but also to play a political role in the Arab region and in the Third World...

Baghdad is getting ready to welcome in 1982 the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, the exercising president of which will be Saddam Hussein, succeeding Fidel Castro. (3)

THE PREPARATION FOR THE CRIME

An investigation brought to light the fact that the Iranian student who was responsible for the bombing at the University, was a member of the Daawat Al-Islam Organization whose headquarters are in Qom in Iran. Daawat Al-Islam (the "Call of Islam") is a small faction of religious inspiration adhering to the ideas of Khomeini (4). This movement was organized in Iraq after the Revolution of 1958. It was then manipulated by the Shah in order to foment disorder in the surrounding countries. Even before the fall of the Shah, the Iraqi authorities had discovered ammunition dumps containing immense quantities of arms and propaganda (tracts, brochures, etc...). The Iranian Revolution aided in the revival of Daawat Al-Islam, which reorganized its cells and proceeded to obtain financial and military assistance from Teheran. Thereafter, the authorities noticed a multiplication of the actions of this movement whose ties with Iran were confirmed after the University bombing.

Iraq's moderation following that attack gave way to more severity when another bomb was thrown from the window of an Iranian school (5) April 5, 1980, during the funeral of the victims of the University attack. An investigation of the Al-Daawat Party led to the discovery of several depots in which great amounts of money and weapons (especially bombs and guns with silencers) were found. In the same hiding-places there were tracts, pamphlets and printed matter of all kinds attacking the Iraqi leaders as well as the Ba'ath Party. Hence, the authorities decided to investigate the Iranians residing in the country. All Iranians having secretly entered Iraq, in particular, the adherents to the Al-Daawat movement and those having been found guilty of activities against the security of the State were deported. Most of the persons in question were either shop owners or wealthy merchants.

On April 12, 1981, another attempt was made to assassinate a member of the Iraqi Government, this time Latif Nsaif Jassim, Minister of Culture and Information. The assailant was soon arrested and confessed his ties with the al-Daawat Party.

The Al-Mustansiriyah bomb was therefore part of a long series of incidents having begun long before April 1, 1980, the inevitable consequences of which increased the tension between Baghdad and Teheran to the point of rupture. Iran's President Bani Sadr himself openly recognized "that the state of tension between Baghdad and Teheran exists since the founding of the Islamic Republic..." (6) Furthermore, Dr. Saadoun Hammadi, Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, had pointed out the gravity of the situation when he declared:

The Arab nation, and especially Iraq, is linked to Iran by very close ties coming from their common geographic location, from the unity of their religion and from their both belonging to one and the same Islamic civilization. .. However, Iran, since the return of Khomeini, has opted for fanaticism, and has again become as in the Shah's time a threat to the sovereignty and security of the neighboring Arab countries around the Gulf and Iraq in particular (7).

The positions taken by each capital confirm that Khomeini's arrival at the top coincided with a multiplication of the incidents between Iraq and Iran. (8)

After the aggression at the University the crisis continued to deteriorate until September 4, 1980, the day Iran took the initiative to bombard several Iraqi cities and oil installations. This discreetly publicized attack by the Iranians fixed the real beginning of the war between these two countries. The University bombing is not an arbitrary reference point selected as the actual commencement of events; it was chosen from the latter chiefly because of the oath taken by the Iraqi President on that occasion. Saddam Hussein repeated this pledge in his press conference of November 11, 1980 in asserting: "We set forth the truth of the situation to the Iranians and we took an oath that the bloodshed at Mustansiriyah would not be an act without repercussions".

STORMY RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN

• The period when Khomeini was still in Iraq

When the Shah's regime tried to carry out reforms under the name of the White Revolution at the end of 1963, the Iranian Parliament met to ratify them. The amendments adopted partly undermined the privileges that the mullahs had acquired over the centuries. Imam Khomeini voiced their opposition by denouncing the reforms decided upon by the Parliament. The Shah reacted by deporting the Ayatollah, who took refuge in Iraq at the beginning of 1964. Baghdad took the necessary precautions to guarantee his security. However, in order to avoid any incidents with Teheran, Iraq put some restrictions upon the political activities that Khomeini would be able to exercise on Iraqi territory, and the Ayatollah promised to respect those conditions.

The Shah took offense at the welcome reserved the religious leader by Baghdad. On several occasions he requested that the latter be handed over. Expelling Khomeini from Iraq was one of the basic conditions he attempted to impose before undertaking an official visit to that country. The Iraqi authorities refused this kind of pressure and continued to guarantee the safety of Khomeini.

In January 1978, at the outbreak of incidents at Qom and Tabriz between the Iranian security forces and demonstrators from the opposition, the Ayatollah's followers obtained additional protection from Baghdad so as to eliminate any possibility of Khomeini being assassinated by the Shah's agents. The Iranian Revolution brought about a movement of sympathy in Iraq that can be seen by reading the press. The latter defended the struggle of the Iranian people whose demands — takeover of the power by the masses and deposition of the Shah — were in perfect agreement with the principles defended by Iraq, a democratic state intending to remain independent of all alignment with any foreign power whatsoever. In this respect, the Imperial regime represented exactly the opposite option

for the Ba'ath leaders: according to them, the reinforcement of the American presence in Iran was aimed at stifling the liberation movement in the Arab world.

At the end of 1978, the events in Iran acted as a spearhead in strengthening the position and influence of Khomeini, who then became involved in activities which went well beyond the limits defined by the authorities and agreed to by him, besides violating Iraq's international obligations towards Iran. Baghdad was to give the Ayatollah a choice, that is, greater discretion or his departure from the country. Khomeini thus decided to leave Iraq and to settle in France at Neauphle-le-Chateau in the Parisian suburbs.

In the atmosphere of collective exaltation then reigning in Iran, the news of Khomeini's departure from Iraq raised a general outcry, and all the more so as certain collaborators of the Ayatollah misrepresented the real circumstances. For example, it was said that Khomeini had been placed under house arrest by the Ba'athist authorities. The publication of this false information brought on mass demonstrations in front of the Iraqi Embassy in Teheran and its Consulate in Mohammarah (Khorramshahr).

• **Khomeini's return to Iran and aggravation of the crisis**

After the return of Khomeini to Iran in February 1979, relations between Baghdad and Teheran became more embittered, despite the support affirmed by the Iraqi leaders towards the Iranian Revolution on several occasions and their desire to see the ties between the two countries renewed. Baghdad's demonstrations of good will, however, were incapable of disarming the hostility of the Iranian leaders. When the former President of Iraq, Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr, addressed a telegram of congratulations to Khomeini on the occasion of the founding of the Iranian Republic, April 5, 1979, the Ayatollah had a response printed that largely exceeded the rules of courtesy existing between states. It represented "the incarnation of aggressivity itself... " "On two occasions Iraq invited Iranian Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan to make an official visit to Iraq in order to clear up their divergences and create the basis for bilateral cooperation. These offers were never answered ". (9) Such initiatives had the effect of spreading the anti-Iraqi tendencies of Khomeini and his partisans throughout the Iranian masses. Another instance was the appeal to overthrow the Iraqi regime as well as the attacks against the Arab Revolution broadcast by the Iranian media. This interminable campaign was soon transformed into more and more violent demonstrations outside the Embassy of Iraq, located on Mossadegh Avenue in Teheran. That Embassy also became the target of various aggressions and threats on the part of the demonstrators (such as arson and occupation of the premises) who returned each day before its walls to scan hateful slogans against Iraq, the Ba'ath and the Iraqi President, and entreating the people to revolt against the Iraqi regime. The walls of the Embassy were blackened by graffiti insulting the Ba'ath and the Iraqi Revolution. The Iraqi Ambassador himself became the object of a press campaign accusing him of spying, led chiefly by the newspaper "Joumhourī Islāmī

", organ of the Islamic Republican Party, stronghold of the Iranian Revolution. In spite of repeated requests for the Iranian authorities to intervene in order to put an end to these acts of aggression, they did not react. At the end of 1979 the Iraqi Consulate in Mohammarah was attacked four times (October 11th and 26th, November 1st and 7th), the mobs breaking both the doors and the windows of the building, wounding the guard and civil servants. On October 7, 1979, Iran demanded that Iraq close its Consulate in Mohammarah within three months. Nevertheless, on January 11, 1980, before the expiry date, the Iranians attacked the Consulate. They seized diplomatic mail and other consular documents, tore up the Iraqi flag and portraits of President Saddam Hussein, before expelling the diplomatic corps they had already insulted and beaten. Iraq reacted by closing the two Iranian Consulates of Basra and Karbala.

AGGRESSION AGAINST THE IRAQI CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN IRAN

The Iranian authorities refused to prolong the residence permit of the Iraqi teachers working at the Iraqi schools in Iran. Different methods were used against these institutions. The Revolutionary Guard besieged several schools, threatened the students, ripped up Iraqi flags and multiplied its acts of provocation so as to find a reason for closing them down. In his press conference of November 11, 1980, the Iraqi Head of State incriminated the behavior of the Iranian state employees posted in the Iraqi schools in Iran and accused them of assisting in the preparation of attacks against these institutions. On this subject, Saddam Hussein was to explain that "these schools teach Arabic to our compatriots in Iran in the same way that the Iranian schools do for their citizens residing in Iraq, in conformity with the agreement signed between the two countries".

Subsequently, the Iranian authorities took their own decision to close all of these schools. The teachers were either deported or arrested for "concealing explosives", and only released after the Iraqi government protested energetically. Next, it was Iraq's turn to close the Iranian schools on its territory, because of subversive goings-on. Furthermore, the Iranian authorities arrested a considerable number of Iraqi citizens inhabiting the region of Arabistan.

These demonstrations took on a new dimension once the Iranian leaders proved to be tacitly in agreement with the acts of aggression committed by the Revolutionary Guard against the Iraqi Embassy, consulates, schools and personnel. The stands taken by those leaders revolved around several main themes:

- Attack against the Iraqi regime and appeal to the Iraqi people to revolt against it.
- Provocative behavior toward the Arab regimes in the Gulf area, in particular, Bahrain, threatened by annexation.

- Refusal by the Iranian leaders to honor their agreements concerning withdrawal from the three islands (the Greater Tumb, the Lesser Tumb and Abu Musa) occupied by the Shah in 1971.

- Finally, profound animosity against Arab nationalism.

The accentuation of the revolutionary process in Iran, shown notably in the elimination of the army's higher echelons and the founding of the Islamic Republic, brought about an aggravation of the conflicts between the various ethnic, political or confessional groups in that country.

Rather than concentrating their efforts on bringing about internal unity and maintaining pacific relations with the neighboring countries, the Iranian leaders tried to export their revolution beyond the borderline.

ATTACKS AGAINST ARAB NATIONALISM

Bani Sadr, at the time Minister of Finances and Economy, declared on December 23, 1979 to the Lebanese newspaper "An-Nahar": "Arab nationalism presents the same features as Zionism. It is by no means in keeping with Islam". He explained in another interview that "Arab countries like Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Oman, Dubai, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia constituted, in the eyes of Iran, states that are not independent ", before adding "that his country did not at all plan to evacuate the Tumb Islands nor Abu Musa"(10). This assertion was in contradiction with promises made beforehand by the leaders of the Iranian Revolution to give back those territories conquered by the Shah and to guarantee to respect the rights of all minorities.

On the same token, while on tour in the Gulf countries in May 1980, the Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, attempted to convince his counterparts to support the principles of the Iranian Revolution in overcoming their Arab national feelings. Several Arab leaders advised Ghotbzadeh not to exasperate Arab sensitivity by constantly defying it, and informed him of their conviction that the movement for Arab unity was perfectly compatible with that of Islam.

EXPORTING THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

Iran's threats became more explicit when Khomeini multiplied his declarations urging the Iranian Revolution to be "exported". This idea was very clearly stressed in the speech drafted by Khomeini on March 31, 1980 and read for him by his son, in which the Ayatollah stated: "We are doing everything possible to export our revolution to other countries in the world". This declaration, in addition to the University bombing and the declarations of different Iranian leaders (notably the above-cited interview with Bani

Sadr in the weekly "An-Nahar"), caused Baghdad to compose two letters of protest against the provocative acts of Teheran (11). These letters were sent April 2nd by the Iraqi Foreign Affairs Minister Saadoun Hammadi to Fidel Castro, in his capacity as President of the 6th Conference of Nonaligned Countries, and to Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations. In reply, on April 8, 1980, the Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister pretended that Aden and Baghdad composed two territories belonging to Persian sovereignty. The same day, Khomeini declared that in the case in which Iraq would continue to demand the evacuation of the three Arab Islands, Iran would lay claim on Baghdad. He also addressed an appeal to sedition to the Iraqi people and army. On April 9, 1980, Ghotbzadeh exclaimed that the Iranian government meant to conquer Iraq.

APPEALS FOR AN ISLAMIC REVOLUTION" IN IRAQ

On April 19, 1980, the Iranian newspaper "Jomhouri Islami" published an appeal of Khomeini: "The Iraqi people must not fall into the hands of its aggressors. Its duty as well as that of the army is to overthrow the Ba'ath, that non-Islamic party".

April 18, 1980, at a meeting with the National Reserve Committee, Khomeini declared : "The Iraqi government is not a real one, it doesn't even have a parliament ; it is a military clique which really holds power and does whatever it pleases. There are neither ties nor communication between the power and the people... Saddam Hussein boasts of his Arabness... It is necessary that all Muslim nations know the real meaning of this notion. 'We are Arabs' is equivalent to saying 'We are not Muslims'... At a certain moment in their history the Arabs stood up against Islam. They want to revive the period of the Umayyads, or that of Jahiliyah, during which force and power were on the side of the Arabs..."

On April 23, 1980, Ghotbzadeh announced in a broadcast message that the duty of the Iranian people was to give its aid to the people of Iraq who were subjected to the repressive measures of a "criminal " regime. He also revealed that only the downfall of Saddam Hussein's regime would satisfy him.

With regard to the Iranian Chief of Staff, he claimed that his army was capable of occupying Iraq and that the population would welcome it with open arms. In addition, on April 23, 1980, Mullah Mohammed Chirazi made the following announcement:

We invite the whole nation to do its duty, that is, to resist by all possible means to and until the fall of the Ba'ath gang:

- Militate within the Islamic factions which offer military training!

- Print and diffuse tracts, books! Intervene in the radio and television and in the newspapers! Cover the walls with slogans!

- Arm the Iraqi people so as to help them resist against tyranny!

Boycott everything that affects the Ba'ath in any way whatsoever!

FALSE NEWS EMITTED BY IRAN: THE ASSASSINATION OF SADDAM HUSSEIN

During his trip through the Middle East, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh announced in Damascus that President Saddam Hussein had been assassinated during an alleged military coup. He also confirmed his government's support of the Iraqi opposition. Furthermore, the Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister gave a press conference on April 28, 1980 in Hazmieh (in the outskirts of Beirut) during which he revealed: "We uphold the Iraqi people so that it can free itself of its criminal regime". Then, replying to a question raised about the possibility of war between Iran and Iraq, he declared that "anything can happen".

ETHNIC AGITATION IN IRAN

Besides the Persians, the Iranian territory includes other ethnic communities, such as those of Arabistan, Baluchistan, Kurdistan and Azerbaijan. Throughout history and more particularly during the reign of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, these communities suffered the immoderate domination of the Persian occupiers. However, each of the attempts to bring about their "Persianization" remained unfruitful; these ethnic groups conserved their specificity. During the revolution, their attitude eased Ayatollah Khomeini's victory. The different ethnic communities started to rebel against the Shah's power and in fact supported the Iranian Revolution in the hope that Khomeini would grant them certain rights. In reality, not only did the Ayatollah fail to answer their expectations, but pursued the harsh methods of the Shah in trying to subdue them. Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali, head of the revolutionary courts of justice in Teheran and leader of the Fidayou-Islami Party, declared: "The Iranian government is opposed to non-Persian minorities claiming the right to autonomy" (12). This policy rapidly created troubles within the various ethnic communities whose hopes for relative autonomy were dashed. However, as soon as a bomb exploded in Baluchistan, Arabistan, Kurdistan or Azerbaijan, or whenever arms were discovered anywhere in Iran, Iraq was immediately accused by the authorities in Teheran.

CLAIMS UPON BAHRAIN AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES OF THE GULF

During an interview at Radio Monte-Carlo, April 30, 1980, Minister Ghotbzadeh indicated that "all the countries in the Gulf are historically a part of Iranian territory."

- Bahrain

April 18, 1980, Sadegh Rouhani, politically close to Ayatollah Khomeini and one of the leaders of the Islamic Revolution, stated that:

Iran would again lay claim to Bahrain if Iraq continued to demand its retreat from the three islands in the Gulf conquered by the Shah in 1971. The decision of the Shah's Parliament to give up Iranian claims on Bahrain is not binding because it emanated from an organism to which we deny any legitimacy.

On June 15th, Sadegh Rouhani returned to the question, declaring during a press conference:

Bahrain is an integral part of the Iranian territory. According to the new constitution of Iran, Bahrain constitutes the fourteenth department of Iran. In the Algiers agreements the dethroned Shah made too many territorial concessions to Iraq. Today, we feel there is a need to elucidate Iran's position on Bahrain due to the claims formulated by certain Arab countries, notably Iraq, regarding the three islands in the Gulf.

- The Tumb Islands and Abu Musa

On April 19, 1980, the radio of Riyadh broadcast a declaration of Bani Sadr in which he once again affirmed Iran's will to maintain its occupation of the Tumb Islands and Abu Musa.

THE REACTIONS OF IRAQ

In July 1980, the international press agencies cited Iraqi information in announcing an Iranian military reinforcement of the border with Iraq. Border incidents between Iraq and Iran had multiplied since January 1980, becoming almost daily by July. During a major press conference held before several hundred international journalists in July 1980, Saddam Hussein once again raised the problem of Iraq-Iran relations:

Iraq publicly declared to the new Iranian authorities that it wished to establish relations of cooperation and neighborliness with Iran, based upon a mutual respect and non-interference in the other's internal affairs, but our good intentions came up against the hate of the arrogant, racist leaders of Teheran. Khomeini should therefore not expect us to be friendly in his regard. We shall not bend before one who has revealed himself a mere assassin in his own country. We do not want war, but if he provokes us, we shall know how to react - we shall not remain arms folded... (13)

* * *

One question arises: What is the reason for Iran's interference in the internal affairs of neighboring Arab countries and its incessant attacks against Iraq? Several explanations have been proposed; in principle, two must be recalled: according to the first, war with Iraq would offer the means to end the conflict opposing the diverse factions in Iran, thus creating the unity which would guarantee that a regime whose economic and social accomplishments are negligible would be kept in place. The second explanation deals with the historical causes of the conflict, the Iraq-Iran war simply representing another episode of Persia's perennial undertaking to annex Arab lands, notably those of Iraq, Shatt-al-Arab and Arabistan. Consequently, the events only expose one aspect of the clash between Iraq and Iran. To better understand the various elements, it is necessary to recall the history of this region to provide a key to the present confrontation over Shatt-al-Arab.

Notes

(1) Founded by the Ba'ath Party following the 8th February 1963 Revolution, and named after the Al-Mustansiriyah School created by Abbasid Caliph Al-Mustansiriyah in 1234.

(2) Cf. Appendix I (p.167) for the integral text of this proclamation.

(3) Le Monde, September 21-22, 1980.

(4) Le Monde, September 20, 1980.

(5) According to an Iraqi-Iranian agreement, Iranian schools exist in Iraqi territory and vice versa.

(6) Le Monde, September, 19, 1980.

(7) Quoted from the declaration distributed to the Arab Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their meeting in Amman on November 21, 1980.

(8) Cf. Iraq-Iran Conflict-Documentary file, 1980 and "Why the Algiers agreement was nullified ", Paris 1980.

(9) Saadoun Hammadi-Cf Appendix II (p.171) for integral text of these invitations, addressed to Prime Minister Bazargan.

(10) An-Nahar, Al Arabi Wa al-Dawli, March 24, 1980, Paris.

(11) Cf. Appendices III and IV (p. 175, p. 179) for the integral text of both letters.

(12) Al-Mostakbal, December 15, 1979, and the text of the new Iranian Constitution (Cf. Iranian review Kayhan April 28, 1979).

(13) Le Monde, July 21, 22, 1980.

Al-Moharer .net note: Dawa Party is the death squads sectarian party of Maliki, “the Prime Minister of the Green Zone”

Chapter 2

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since long ago the region of Shatt-al-Arab has constituted an exceedingly controversial subject between Iraq and Iran, despite all attempts at reconciliation, the conflict has only grown worse: expansionist Iran has persisted in trying to annex this area, whereas Iraq has tenaciously tried to conserve what it considers as a blessing bequeathed by history. A superficial analysis would attribute this conflict to mainly economic and geographical causes, but in fact it is more complex, translating a real confrontation between two profoundly different peoples, the Arabs and the Persians. Citing historical rights must take us back into the past in order to locate the roots of the conflict along with the political pretensions that are at odds in this part of the world. Only then shall we know the real meaning of the Iraq-Iran war.

This investigation will essentially deal with the history of Arabistan, which is at the heart of the conflict. The Shatt-al-Arab will also be included for it has always been Arab and Iraqi, with respect to both its profound reality and the political powers that have ruled it. How can the Shatt-al-Arab always have been both Arab and Iraqi? Before replying, we must take a glimpse at the geography of this region.

GEOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

Before speaking of its history and the definition of Iraqi rights over Arabistan, these territories must be situated in their geographical context. From the Iranian border on the Gulf to Sharm-el-Sheikh or Ras-Sinai on the Red Sea, there are several strategic areas such as the Strait of Hormuz and Bab-al-Mandab, which enclose the Arabian Peninsula. Sovereignty over one or the other of these will be reflected in a minutely calculated regional equilibrium. It is thus that the Straits of Hormuz and Bab-al-Mandab, which constitute two strategic spots at the entrance of the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea, are Arab, whereas the islands facing the Arabian Peninsula, namely, Lesser and Greater Tumbs as well as Abu Musa, were occupied in 1971 by the armed forces of the Shah. They were not surrendered by the Iran of Ayatollah Khomeini. It is even the case that some of these islands have fallen under the direct control of the great world powers, as are Masirah and Socotra. The latter, once, was transformed into a Soviet military base.

The geographical and strategic makeup of the Arabian Gulf resembles that of the Red Sea: there, the Island of Perim controls the southern entry of this sea; it too is in an Arab zone, while Sharm-el-Sheikh has undergone “Israeli” occupation, implying a threat to

navigation and to all the states bordering on that sea. In any case, it is the study in depth of the Shatt-al-Arab that directly interests our analysis. We shall successively treat the region of Shatt-al-Arab, the Strait of Hormuz, Arabistan and the three islands (Lesser and Greater Tumbs, Abu Musa), without forgetting that though they are presented separately, these regions form a whole: a single strategic entity and a unique source of wealth constantly envied by the Persians.

SHATT-AL-ARAB

It is made up of a delta in the Arabian Gulf created by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, and it is situated 47 miles north of Basra, stretching over a distance of 136 miles between Al-Qurnah and the Gulf, into which it empties close to the port of Al-Faw. Its width varies according to the region, from approximately 1/4 to 3/4 mile. Waters coming from Hawizah close to Al-Qurnah empty into the Shatt-al-Arab, like those rivers originating in Karmat-Ali and irrigating the orchards of Basra; lastly, the Karun joins it at the entrance to the city of Mohammarah to the south of Basra. A great number of effluents and waterways irrigate the two banks of the Shatt-al-Arab and form a homogeneous hydrographic network, naturally connecting the plains of Basra to those of Arabistan. None of these waters ever dry up because the ebb and flow of the tide maintains a permanent irrigation. Aside from its hydraulic potential, this earth is one of the most fertile in the world. It lends itself particularly well to the organization of its agricultural and maritime resources (1).

When one comes to realize that 635 waterways bathe this region, crossing rich plains which begin at Basra and continuing along both banks of the delta where the palm groves contain over 14 million palm trees, it becomes easier to conceive the evocative power of these areas often recalled in Arab literature and painting.

The Shatt-al-Arab constitutes the only maritime outlet of Iraq. It is the waterway connecting Iraq to the Gulf and beyond it, the oceans. A mere glance at a map will show that Iraq, locked inland between Turkey, the An-Nafud Desert to the south and the Zagros Mountains to the west, has but this narrow passage to the sea. Consequently, this region is vital for Iraq, as it links the south of the country to the north. That is why any state occupying the bank of Shatt-al-Arab isolates Iraq by cutting off this natural access to the Gulf from its southern part. This region is of primary importance to the country's economy, notably with regard to its privileged position in international commercial relations. It also goes without saying that the Shatt-al-Arab is the only natural waterway allowing vessels to reach the port of Basra. For this reason, too, Iran wishes to control the navigation in this region.

Before enumerating the various points of contention in this zone, two regions should also be treated, the Strait of Hormuz and Arabistan:

That muddy delta...barren landscape inhabited by skeletal brush, beneath a humid sky at the gates of the Orient. This time...the Shatt-al-Arab constitutes the battlefield. Tributary

of the Tigris and the Euphrates, cradle of ancient Mesopotamia, this delta, opening upon the Arabian Gulf, is the jugular vein of Arabistan and the oil fields...

STRAIT OF HORMUZ

A point of communication where the waters of the Gulf merge with those of the Indian Ocean, it derives its strategic importance from this situation. The power controlling it has at the same time supervision of the Jugular feeding the world economy in petroleum. It is through this channel, whose width never exceeds 60 km that boats navigate at a rhythm of one oil tanker every ten minutes, equivalent to 62% of the oil transit intended for world consumption distributed in the following way: 90% of Japan's energy needs, 70% of the Common Market's consumption and 50% of the American needs. The Strait of Hormuz is the sole passageway out of the Gulf for the coastal states: Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

It is indeed this key position that in the course of history and its fierce battles was at stake. It is known that this region is inhabited by Arab tribes. Still today, it can be seen what the Arab civilization at the Bedouin era was like from the customs and characteristic features of these populations. The Strait of Hormuz was regained by the Arabs in the beginning of the 20th century. It had always been a place of combat and contestation between the World Powers, and hence, was occupied from the end of the 15th century by the Ottomans, the Persians and the Portuguese successively, and at the beginning of the 16th century by the English. Throughout history, the region of Hormuz knew a strategic importance which only increased with the discovery of oil. The economic weight of the Strait of Hormuz pushed the Shah of Iran into preventing the implantation of any foreign power along the banks of the straits, notably on the coast of Oman. Iran therefore fought against the revolution in Dhufar, which opposed the regime of Oman. Furthermore, the Shah carried on a policy of hegemony in this area. He organized a military expedition to overthrow the islands in the straits so as to build bases. The Shah made of Chah Bahar a naval base with ultra-modern equipment able to shelter submarines.

The Shah spent billions of dollars on American technical assistance and equipment. As soon as the English evacuated the Gulf, November 30, 1971, he grasped the islands located near the straits. His troops took over the Lesser and Greater Tumbs and Abu Musa. After the revolution, Iran conserved its control over the straits and in 1980; the Iranian fleet pursued its military operations there. Moreover, the Iranian patrol boats based on the Island of Bandar Abbas escort to this day the tankers going through the straits.

Due to the specific character of the Khomeini revolution, the mutual apprehension of the United States and U.S.S.R. was stirred. Reacting to Iranian threats, Moscow and Washington sent their fleets toward the Gulf where, from then on, they have remained stationed and in a state of alert, not far from the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz. If the straits are vital to this region, they are all the more so to the entire world. Hence, the preoccupation of the Western powers at the outbreak of war between Iraq and Iran. Immediately after Iran had threatened to bomb the straits in case of foreign intervention

in that conflict, the United States emitted a communiqué dated September 20/1980, proposing the calling of a six-member conference - United States, Great Britain, France, West Germany, Japan and Italy - with the security of the straits on its agenda:

We have consulted a certain number of friendly countries about the conditions of oil supplies and international navigation in the Gulf. Given the importance of reducing the economic consequences of the conflict between Iraq and Iran upon international navigation and the world petroleum markets, the United States indicated that they may hold a meeting to discuss this problem if necessary. However, no meeting of this kind was decided. (3)

Whatever the nature of this Iranian threat, and despite the narrowness of the straits, the affirmations indicating that the mere sinking of a boat would block them are obviously false. Actually, there is a sizeable distance between the coasts; the maritime lines traced on the maps the truly navigable space. In principle, a maximal margin of security is accounted for in the strait's navigability: it is thus that the basis for any cargo is a draft of 20 meters while in reality the half is more than sufficient. Weighing this observation, the distance actually navigable in the straits extends over 50 km.

Nevertheless, fear of seeing the straits closed down because of the Iranian Revolution remains strong (4). Such an act would provoke the economic collapse of numerous states, especially those with an Industrial structure. The event could even provoke a world war.

THE ISLANDS OF THE TWO TUMBS AND ABU MUSA

In spite of its limited area, the Arabian Gulf is very deep, which has facilitated the formation of a multitude of small islands. These islands were created by natural phenomena, for instance, river alluvium (Bubiyah and Warbah Rivers), or by the action of waves and marine currents carried by the wind toward the coasts, or else by coral rising to the surface of the sea found all along the coasts of Qatar and Bahrain. The majority of these islands are saline, namely, those of Larak, Henqam, Tumb, Abu Musa, Forur, Sirri, Halul and others that have emerged.

• Abu Musa

Abu Musa is a rectangular island situated 24 miles from the city of Sharjah along the coast of Oman and 44 miles from the Iranian coast. It is low land covered with sand plains studded with greenery and palm groves crowded around wells of drinking water. Several volcanic hills are to be seen, the altitude of which does not go beyond a hundred meters. Approximately one thousand people live there; they belong to two Arab tribes originating from Sharjah. The island's economy is based on raising livestock, fishing and agriculture. Immediately after the Iranian conquest, efforts were made to somewhat modernize the island.

• Greater Tumb

Greater Tumb is located at the entrance to Bab-al-Salam in the Strait of Hormuz, 19 miles from the Emirate of Ras-al-Khaimah. Its area is 35 sq. miles. It is inhabited by about 800 people of Arab origin and was under the administrative control of the Ras-al-Khaimah Emirate. Its inhabitants live from fishing and tending animals.

• **Finally, Lesser Tumb** is found in the Strait of Hormuz about 6 miles to the west of Grand Tumb islet. A little over half a mile long and less than half a mile wide, it is made up of deep-colored hills attaining 40 m. The only life on this islet is Arab fishermen and shepherds.

Due to their proximity to the Strait of Hormuz, these Islands hold a considerable interest, comparable to that of Gibraltar at the entrance to the Mediterranean, or that of Aden at the entrance to the Red Sea.

Back-to-back with the coasts of the Emirates, these three islands constitute observation posts for the coastlines of the Gulf countries: United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq and Iran. (5)

Any power possessing these islands reinforces its position in the Strait of Hormuz and thus controls the entire region militarily, politically and commercially. From a strategic point of view, the Strait of Hormuz and the three islands are complementary. Aside from this, these islands are rich in minerals. The English Company Alwan Al Wadi Azahabi (6) possesses, in exchange for annual dues of approximately \$ 250,000, a monopoly that was granted at the beginning of the century by Salem Ben Sultan, the uncle of the Sheikh at Sharjah. This company continues today to exploit the iron oxide deposits. Abu Musa is also well known for its red earth from which cosmetic products (for example, lipstick) can be manufactured. The abundance of the maritime resources around this island allows a fisherman with "traditional" equipment to earn 150 Rials a day (about \$45). Oil drillings have been undertaken in its territorial waters, leading to the discovery of deposits that have not yet been tapped because of rivalries between the English and American oil companies.

The history of these three islands is closely tied with that of Oman. These territories have had a common fate over the centuries. From the 18th to the beginning of the 19th centuries, Oman was prosperous. The Arab tribes called Al-Kawassem, who have the same origin as all those settled around the Gulf, transferred their ancient capital of Ras-al-Khaimah to Sharjah under Sultan Ben Sakr (1803-1856). (7) The Al-Kawassem tribes led a fierce resistance against the English penetration. Great Britain was finally successful in reducing them and occupied Ras-al-Khaimah along with all other Al-Kawassem forts. London then imposed several conventions, signed successively between 1820 and 1853. Following the English occupation and the decline of the Al-Kawassem, particularly after the loss of its fleet, Iran started to extend its control over this region. It is hence that in Lanja in 1887, the Iranians overthrew the Arab government led by the Al-Kawassem and occupied Sirri which is found to the west of Abu Musa and was dependent on the Emirate of Sharjah. Afterwards, they occupied Henqam, which belonged to the Bani-Yass Arab tribe. Despite the extension of its influence to the west of

the Arabian Gulf, Iran never pretended to hold sovereignty over the islets of the two Tumbs nor Abu Musa. The Emir of Sharjah, on which Ras-al-Khaimah depended, maintained control of these three islands. All existing sources attest the sovereignty of Sharjah over these islets. Lorimer, who was given the task of making up a "guide to the Gulf" by the Indian government, indicated that these three islands were under the power of the Sheikh of Sharjah "who sojourns on them at moments of great heat". (8) In his research this author was able to consult secret documents placed at his disposal by the government of India, but which were only made public in 1960.

At the beginning of the 20th century, as an effect of the Persian occupation, trade in the port of Lanja declined and was finally ruined after the emigration of the Arab tradesmen toward the coast of Oman. In the meantime, the Arabs developed the Island of Abu Musa and transformed it into a commercial center used for the exportation of their merchandise. They requested that the British shipping companies include this islet among their mooring ports while awaiting the creation of a free one. Abu Musa quickly rivaled with the Iranian ports.

In 1904, a Persian ship, the "Muzafiri", dropped anchor at Abu Musa. On board, there was a high-ranking British official taking care of customs for these islands, who lowered the flag of Sharjah to replace it by the Persian flag. An Iranian customs administration was then established on the island. This act of aggression caused the Sheikh of Sharjah to write a letter of protestation to the British agent in the Gulf. Great Britain backed out and thus obtained the withdrawal of the Iranians from that island. Sharjah was then able to restore its former prerogatives, after an Iranian occupation which had lasted three months.

Iran, having renounced this territory against its will, made further attempts to occupy the three islands. Great Britain, reticent at the thought of seeing Iran control these areas that are rich in natural resources, threatened to question Iran's occupation of the Arab islands of Sirri and Henqam. From then on, the status quo was maintained up to the middle of the 20th century. The departure of the English from the Gulf in 1971 made things easier for the Shah. The latter accepted to drop his claims to Bahrain but succeeded in getting the approval of the World Powers for his plan to occupy the three islands, taking advantage of the ceremonies on the occasion of the 2500th anniversary of the Persian Empire to assure himself the tacit support of those powers. (9)

Among themselves the Arab countries of the Gulf had planned to create a federation. Realizing the danger, the Shah threatened to occupy the islands, and then did just that on November 31, 1971, on the eve of the proclamation of this union.

ARABISTAN

The Iraq-Iran conflict principally concerns this area. All throughout its history and even though it makes up a territory that is naturally Arab, Arabistan had been annexed, occupied or shared by different foreign powers. It is located southeast of Iraq and is bounded on the north and east by mountains of the Zagros chain. These mountains stretch over a distance of 620 miles and are 120 miles wide; their altitude varies from 1100 to

1700 meters. Rising up behind Arabistan, they seem to be a natural barrier separating this region from Iran. To the west, Arabistan reaches the two Iraqi departments of Basra and Missan, while to the south it is bordered by the Arabian Gulf. The surface area of Arabistan is about 71,430 sq. miles, with 263 miles in length and 238 miles in width. In 1936, Iran amputated 9,800 sq. miles by annexing them to its southernmost department. The population of Arabistan numbers 3.5 million composed of Arab tribes having come in successive waves from the Arabian Peninsula well before Islam.

This region is known in Arabic under the name "Ahwaz", plural of the name "Hawz" and derived from the verb "Haza Yahuz", which means appropriation. This name simply designates the right a person actually exercises over a territory. It dates back to the period when Alexander the Great conquered Persia and divided it into provinces. The Arabs of this region reassembled themselves in an independent department they called "Ahwaz", in reference to the properties owned by the various tribes therein. (10) Subsequently, the Persians were to call this territory Ahwaz with an unvoiced "h", which takes away its meaning; in fact, the Arabic alphabet contains two letters which correspond, first, to the unvoiced "h" and, second, to the voiced "h". This phonetic shade of difference does not exist in Persian, both letters being confounded in one unvoiced "h", whereas to confuse these two phenomena in Arabic would modify the meaning of a word or make it incomprehensible, as with "Ahwaz". When this word became current in Persia, it lost its etymological meaning by the transformation of its voiced "h" into an unvoiced one. (11)

Later on, the Persians named this region Khuzestan, that is to say, the "land of combats and forts", for the Arabs had constructed military fortifications there which were to serve as bases of operations in their expansion towards Persia and India. Under the Safawid Dynasty, this region was known under the name of Arabistan rather than Khuzestan, in reference to its inhabitants (12). The term Arabistan, which indicates the Arab nature of a people or territory, is the word used by all non-Arab populations of the region to designate the Arab lands situated on their frontiers; it is thus that the Turks called Syria, and even today, the Persians say "Saudi Arabistan" for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (13).

THE CITIES OF ARABISTAN

In former times, the cities of Arabistan could be grouped into two zones, those in the north and those in the south, but with the discovery of oil in 1908 at Masjed Suleiman, a third zone was constituted to the west. During history, these cities changed names several times according to circumstances and to the power administering them. For this reason, it is necessary to give some details on the most important cities of Arabistan.

• Abadan

This city is also known under the name of the island on which it lies: Khodr Island; in Persian, it is called Abadan. Located 18 km to the south of the city of Mohammarah, today it is above all a port through which the oil of Arabistan transits. An imposing petroleum refinery is also found there. Built upon an island running north-south,

surrounded by the waters of the Shatt-al-Arab, this very ancient locality was visited by many famous travelers.

All the historians of the first Islamic times cited it as belonging to the department of Basra. Abadan never experienced an exceptional development; however, at certain periods its duties were in the order of 441,000 dinars, a relatively high sum paid to the treasury of Basra where the region's central administration was located. In the past, this city was thought of as an Iraqi borderline city. Its location gave rise to an Iraqi saying: "There are no villages beyond Abadan" (14).

• **Al-Mohammarah**

It is called Khorramshahr in Persian and is found at the outlet of the Karun River in the Shatt-al-Arab. It is an important port the economy of which is closely dependent on the region of Basra. Hajj Youssef Ben Mardaw, a Sheikh of the Arab tribe of Bou-Kasseb, was responsible for its construction in 1812. Hajj Youssef and his men made it their capital, calling it Al-Mohammarah (15). This name designates the color red in Arabic, and was probably given to this city because of the color of the earth — red sand — carried by the Karun all the way to its mouth. Today, Mohammarah is one of the most important ports of Arabistan. Recent works to expand it now permit the largest vessels to use this port.

• **Al-Ahwaz**

It is called Al-Ahwaz in Persian (see above for the phonetic variation between these two words). This city is found along the Karun River in the center of Arabistan. Long ago it was the capital of this emirate, but suffered enormously during the revolts of the Zanj.

Al-Hawizah

It takes the name Dasht-Mishan in Persian and is situated on the Karkheh River to the northeast of Mohammarah near the Iraqi department of Missan. It is the place where the Bani Tarf tribes resided. Later on, during the Mongol period, the Arab state of the Moucha'chi'ins made it their capital (in 1441).

• **Dezful**

The Persians named this city built among the hills Kantaret Kaz or Kantaret Al-Kala'a. It is located in the north of Arabistan. To the southwest of this locality, ruins of the city of Al-Shush are to be found, where French archeologists discovered in 1901-1902 the famous ziggurat (stela) of Hammurabi.

• **Felhiyah**

This city, known as Chawkan in Persian, is inhabited by the Bani-Kaab tribes. It was the capital of the Arab emirs of Arabistan before being supplanted by al-Mohammarah.

- **Tustar**

Finally, this city called Shushter by the Persians, with its perennial springs, is considered as the heart of the fertile valley of Arabistan.

All of these localities with their original Arab name and the way they have more recently been called in Persian bring us to an analysis of the complex identity of Arabistan as seen through this ambivalence. Beyond its two banks, the Shatt-al-Arab forms a plain of constant fertility where the climatic and vegetal conditions attest to its unity. Enclosed by two mountain chains, Arabistan runs toward an opening upon the Gulf in its southern part: "The plain of Arabistan", writes Donald Wilber, "is a prolongation of the low plain found in the south of Iraq" (15). This plain is composed of lime deposited by the waterways flowing in this region and more especially by the two greatest of them, the Karun and the Karkheh. There was a time when Arabistan and a part of the Iraqi department of an-Nasiriyah were flooded over with water. Arnold Wilson claims that Arabistan was constituted at the same time as the other countries in the low region found in between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. All these lands have a geographical unity that brought prosperity to Mesopotamia and the Chaldeans. Later, it came under Arab control, whose domination spread throughout Persia and beyond (16). All these territories formed by the lie-accumulation of lime are exceptionally rich in oil. The potential of the oil layer in this region is 68 billion barrels; presently, it produces between 3 and 4 million barrels per year. (at the time of the publication of this book)

Louis Massignon considered this region as an Arab territory and described it as follows:

We find ourselves in the middle of the Shatt-al-Arab delta, hut this delta, compared to that of the Nile, the Ganges or the Chinese rivers, clearly appears dissymmetric, and curiously so. It occupies a part of the floor of the gulf having subsided and which it has filled, forming on its southwest extremity the Arabian plateau with its appearance of an Indo-African peneplain, while on the northeast side more recent Persian plications are found.

In sum, on its left, the delta has the desert which is barely higher, and Basra is the first oasis behind its canals; to the light, it is punctuated by a system of faults and subsiding which, with its aligned oil fields, prolongs the gulf up to the great bluish, pale arcs and parallel folds of the Arabistan and Pars mountains. On this side the waters of the delta are so abundant that they annex the Karun and its basin...

Recent surveys have shown that beneath the Shaft. 30 or 40 meters below the ground, a subterranean Shatt flows, produced by infiltrations from the first and to which are owed the fresh water sources found in the gulf area (16).

The region of Arabistan and the south of Iraq have an identical climate, at the same time desert-like and Mediterranean. There is no clear separation between seasons. However, in Arabistan as in Basra, summer and winter are more marked, while autumn and spring last only shortly.

The Iraq-Iran conflict has revived the problem of to whom Arabistan belongs. This territory constitutes a national problem in the Arab mind. Examination of the past appears to be the best instrument for analyzing the identity of this territory and its population. Thus, a recollection of the events which brought about the separation of Arabistan from the Arab lands would now seem appropriate.

Notes-chapter 2

(1) the waters around Al-Faw are well known for the quality of its fish.

(2) *Le Point*, n° 419, September 24, 1980.

(3) *Le Monde*, September 30, 1980.

(4) *Between March 1979 and November 1980, Iran reiterated its threat to block the access to the Strait of Hormuz 14 times.*

(5) *Le Monde*, September 25, 1980.

(6) Meaning “the colors of the golden valley”.

(7) *Abed, S.A., The Role of Al-Kawassem in the Arabian Gulf, Baghdad, 1976, p. 114 on. (Arabic).*

(8) *Lomier, J.G. Gazette of the Persian Gulf. Oman and Central Arabia, Calcutta. Volumes, 1908.*

(9) *Briere, Claire and Blanche, Pierre, Iran, Revolution in the Name of God, Seuil, Paris, 1979, pp. 9-10.*

(10) *Hamawy, Yakout, Encyclopedia of the World, I, p. 380 (Arabic).*

(11) *Le Strange, L., The Land of the Eastern Caliphate. Cambridge 1905, p. 267. Baghdadi Safi-el-Din. Observation Post of Places and their Names, I. Cairo, 1954, p. 135. (Arabic).*

(12) *The references are numerous; we shall limit ourselves to citing:*

— *Ibn Hawkal, Image of the Earth. Al-Hayatt Library. 1968, p. 225 on. (Arabic).*

— *Aboul-Fida, The Reform of Lands, p. 311 on. (Arabic).*

— *Dairat Al-Maarif, Al-Islamiyah, Encyclopedia of Islam IX, ch. 1. Baghdad, p. 37. (Arabic).*

— *Al-Istikhri, M. Al-Masalek, Wal-Mamalek (Routes and Countries), I. Cairo, 1961, p. 62. (Arabic).*

(13) *Sarkis, Yaakoub, Geographical Research, I. Baghdad, 1948, p. 237. (Arabic).*

(13) *Haidary F., The Title of Glory: Baghdad, Basra, and Najd. Baghdad, 1962, pp. 179-81. (Arabic).*

(14) *Hourani, Georges, The Arabs and Navigation in the Indian Ocean, Cairo, 1958, p. 44. (Arabic).*

(14) *Wilber, Donald N., Iran, Past and Present, Princeton University Press, 1956, p. 12.*

(15) *Wilson, Sir Arnold, Southwest Persia, A Political Officer's Diary, 1907-14, Oxford I'MI, p. 93.*

(16) *Massignon, L. "Mohammarah", Journal of the Muslim World. No. II, Year II, November. 1908, p. 385.*

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT:

THE ANCIENT PERIOD

Three thousand years before Christ the lands of Arabistan emerged from the sea (1). A Semitic population settled there, and later on, Arab tribes called the Bani al'Am. Amidst the Bani al-'Am existed an important branch, the Bani Tamim, whose descendants still inhabit the south of Arabistan today.

The Acadian kingdom, located in Iraq, had submitted these populations to its authority. This region was then subjected to the aggressions of the Elameans (2) having come from the East. The Babylonians ended these attacks under the reign of Hammurabi, who conquered the aggressors. Afterwards, the Assyrian State was created which, despite its ephemeral duration, safeguarded the independence of the region till the arrival of the Chaldeans. It was then the Chaldeans who Underwent aggressions from the outside, that is, from the Ahminid Kingdom having appeared around 550 B.C. Notwithstanding these attacks, the Chaldeans preserved their autonomy and their laws inherited from Babylonia. The country endured another attack in 241 A.D., when the Sasanid Dynasty of Persian origin attempted to conquer Arabistan. The resistance of the population was such that the Sasanids finally gave up. Realizing the strength of these tribes, they came to a compromise with them and recognized the independent principalities composing the region.

In spite of many attempts on the part of the Sasanids to subject this region, it kept its Arab character until the beginning of the 4th century A.D. This Arabness involved customs, practices and a way of life that are specific to the Arab Bedouin culture. All researchers specialized in ancient history and who have visited the region concur in recognizing its Arab character. They consider that with lower Mesopotamia, modern Arabistan forms a geographical and cultural unity. This region successively withstood several ancient civilizations, namely, the Sumerians, the Acadians and the Babylonians.

From its birth, the Arab civilization assimilated the bases of all the preceding ones before more profoundly taking root in its Arab specificity. This process went on until the emergence of Islam, which gained Persia and then spread abroad (3). Jacqueline Berryne has written the following on the Arabian Gulf:

The Arabs have remained the masters of the Arabian Gulf coastline. The Persian Kings were afraid of the sea and never became its masters. They found it quite intolerable that the Arabs assert themselves on that coast (4).

Sir Percy Sykes, a well-known historian on Persia, explained the cause of the inaptitude of the Persian navigator:

Nothing better exemplifies the influence of natural phenomena upon the character and behavior of a people than the repulsion of the Persians for the sea, from which they are separated by gigantic mountains (5).

This demonstrates that there is a clear difference between Arabia and Persia with regard to their relationship with the marine element. The fact that the Arab is attracted by water is directly connected to the severe Conditions of life in the Bedouin environment, to dryness, and to life in the desert. It is for this reason that he desperately seeks water. He does not give up for fear of any danger and tries to see the freshness of a spring in the lull water of the sea. He has forever lived in a desert surrounded by the sea. His history is therefore that of a flight from the desert towards water. The migrations of the Arab tribes of the south towards the northern coasts were thus related to an instinct of conservation. And so the attachment of the Arabs to Arabistan can be explained throughout the first phase of their history: this region was indeed reputed for its fertility.

Climatic conditions in Persia were not the same. Even though some regions of Persia have a desert like climate, this country is watered by both streams and rivers, which explains the slight attraction of the Persians towards the sea. Thus, it remained a universe unknown to them, and they did not set out to explore it. In fact, it was the appearance of life and civilization that incited the Persians to cross the Zagros Mountains and head down towards the coast.

The civilizations of that region, born from the waters, had given water an unequalled importance. Edouard Dhorme, Professor at the College de France, has described this special relationship, which existed between the peoples of the region and water:

The Sumerians and Acadians imagined that under our earth at the limits of the median land (Arabistan) there was a great sheet of fresh water, which was like the reservoir from which the sources of brooks and rivers burst forth. This water, upon which floated our earth, stretched beyond the horizon and formed a circle analogous to the Okeanos river of the Greeks.... (6).

The most important divinities of the immense pantheon of Sumer, Akkad, Babylonia and Assyria... offered themselves to the adoration of the riverine dwellers of the Euphrates and the Tigris... (7).

Concerning ancient history, this analysis is of interest because of its psychological implications. Further on, it will be seen that the arrival of Persians in Arabistan marked the beginning of a perennial interference in the internal affairs of this region, leading to innumerable conflicts with its inhabitants.

ARABISTAN AFTER THE ISLAMIC CONQUEST

The presence of the Arabs in this territory is hence multi-secular and dates back well before Jesus Christ. After the Bani Tamim, who came to look for water, other tribes settled in Arabistan prior to and following the emergence of Islam (8). Turning to Maxime Rodinson, he has ascertained the supremacy of the nomadic Arab tribes over this region: "The Arab penetration is ancient. It certainly must have begun before Islam, notably when the Arab tribes were occupying a great part of Mesopotamia... in the 6th century B.C." (9)

The Arab presence took on its present-day political and administrative dimensions "when the Arabs conquered this region in 640 A.D. under the caliphate of Omar Ibn ul-Khattab". (10) Arabistan from then on remained an Arab province, administratively attached to 'Bahrain after having been put under the rule of Harqus Ben Zuhair. During certain periods, however, it was attached to Basra. This explains why Arabistan was exposed to numerous crises under the Umayyads and the Abbasids, the most important of which were provoked by the Kharijites, the Qarmatians and the Zanjs. The latter destroyed a great number of cities in Arabistan in 874 A.D.

Historians claim that the revolt of Sahib al-Zanj lined al-Ahwaz. The Orientalist L. Massignon has spoken of the numerous attacks by the Zanjs that the Arabs of this area had to bear: "The country greatly suffered from the Kharijite revolt in the 8th century, the Hindu Jats or Zoot in the 9th and especially from the movement of the Bani Bridi..." (11)

In 935, the governors of the peripheral provinces became more autonomous from the central powers. Under the caliphate of Abul- Abbas al-Muqtadir, the Bani

Hamdan took Mosul along with the territories of Bakr, Rabi'ah and Modar. Ibn Wathiq seized Basra and Arabistan was given over to the domination of al-Bridi. The territory of the caliphate was then reduced to Baghdad and its province.

In 936, Mohammed Ibn Wathiq sent an army to combat al-Bridi in order to re-conquer Arabistan. However, he sought the protection of the Buwayhids, who, after having helped him, imposed their rule, so that this territory together with Baha'ud-Dawla became an essential part of their state. This continued until the end of the Buwayhid period in 1055, and then it was the turn of the Seljuqs to occupy the region (12).

To summarize, it can be said that despite the political crises this region experienced, it belonged to an Arab empire that had no boundaries between its provinces. Arabistan was therefore integrated into a larger entity bestowed with political and religious unity under the reign of the Rachidoun Caliphs (13) of the Umayyads and the Abbasids.

Arabistan maintained its Arab character until the fall of the Abbasid caliphate. Later on, in 1258, the Mongols vanquished and destroyed the Abbasid state. Arabistan, like the neighboring territories, then went through a period of decadence even while being coveted by the states of Genghis Khan, Tamerlane and other conquerors.

RETURN TO ARAB POWER

In 1436, the Arab dynasty of the Moucha'chi'iyah regained mastery over Arabistan under its founder Mohammed Al-Moucha'chi'i (14) that Longrigg described as a descendant of the Rabi'ah. He selected the city of Hawizah as capital of his emirate. Following his death in 1438, his son Mohsen took over and constructed a new capital, al-Mohseniyah. He issued money, consolidated relations with Iraq and spread his rule throughout Arabistan.

In 1501, Isma'il as-Safawi founded the Safawid state in Persia, while the Moucha'chi'ins governed Arabistan. Thus, another historical phase commenced such that the Safawids appeared as a new force counterbalancing that the Ottomans. Between the two empires a ferocious struggle started and Arabistan became one of its battle-grounds. After a Safawid attack, Dezful and Tustar were conquered for a brief period.

Subsequently, Mubarak Ben Abdul-Muttaleb Ben Badran came to power, and his reign (1588 to 1616) was to be known as a flourishing epoch: he re-conquered the cities of Dezful and Tustar and imposed himself throughout the province. The Portuguese traveler, Pedro Teiskeira, who visited the region in 1604, wrote:

The entire province situated to the east of Shatt-al-Arab formed an Arab emirate governed by Mubarak Abdul-Muttaleb, who remained independent from both Persians and Turks, concluding a military agreement with Portugal, the penetration of which into the Arabian Gulf dates from this period (15). Another voyager, Pietro Della Valle, who

navigated down the Karun River to where it empties into the Shatt-al-Arab, furnished other details:

Mansur..., who governed from 1634 to 1643, dominated Shatt-al-Arab. He permitted no vessel to pass without paying him duties... He was in permanent connection with the Governor of Basra. He obstinately resisted the attempts of Shah 'Abbas to intrude upon the internal affairs of Arabistan. (16)

From the above, it can be concluded that:

1. Besides its well Known fertility, Arabistan was bestowed with an ancient history substantially enriched by the contributions of several civilizations, notably that of the Arabs.
2. The Persians, as well as other foreign states, were aware of the strategic importance of this Arab region. For that reason they coveted it and wished to subject it to their domination since ancient times. In spite of repeated attempts, provoking hundreds of battles and thousands of victims the Persians were never able to appropriate this region which preserved its Arab character.

It still may be asked why conflict between the population of Arabistan and the Persians has persisted from before the 16th century. What had been the economic importance of this region? The Orientalist Louis Massiignon analyzed its attraction in the above-cited article:

The two chief waterways, the Shatt and the Karun, command an entire network of natural routes of economic exchanges the center of which is presently found between Mohammarah in the east and New Basra in the west, as it ten centuries ago between Old Basra (Zubayr) and Ubullah. These half-water, half-land routes are also used for the export of products harvested and manufactured in the country, like silk cloth from Tustar and, in former times, sugar from Shush. (17)

European vessels had penetrated into the Gulf with the intention of monopolizing the trade as well as the afore-mentioned products. As G. Curzon has written in his known book:

The Western forces have recourse to methods similar to those which existed in the relations between Arab tribes: maritime alliances, then war; Portugal, Holland, France England all used these methods. (18)

Thus, the conflict between Arabs and Persians very quickly became international once the Western powers taken the offensive in the Arabian Gulf region, as we shall see.

* * *

Notes

1 - Parrot. A., in Mesopotamian Archeology in Stages, Paris, 1946, Bitten.M. Babylonia, Paris, 1848

2 - Elam was an ancient state adjacent to Chaldea.

3 - Berryne, J., The Discovery of the Arabian Peninsula (V.A.) Beirut, 1963, p. 98.

4 - Berryne, i.Ibid. p. 166.

5 - Sykes, Sir Percy. A History of Persia,II. London. 1921. p. 366.

6 - Dhorme, Edouard, The Religions of Babylonia and Assyria, P.U.F., 1949, p. 32.

7 - Ibid., p. 138.

8 - The largest tribes that Arabistan welcomed are the following: the Bani al-Am, the Bani al-Hanzala, the Ka'ab tribes, the Bani Rabi'ah, the Bou-Kasseb (including the Bu-Gbis, ad-Dris, al Hanafira, 'an-Nassar, Kabu ad-Dabis, 'al-Hilalat, ad-Dawalim BaytGanim, Kanan, 'al Bu-maruf, 'al-'Idan, 'al-I-fawaja, 'Ahlul-'Arid, 'al-Bagagira, 'az-Zuwaydat, Bayt Hag Faysal and 'al-'Atab)and the Bani Tarf. Yet, the greatest branches of the Arabistan tribes up to this day are 'al-Bawiya, original branch of the Rabi'ah tribe and which is subdivided into ten other branches, such as Bayt-Khazaal, Bani Lam, descending from the Bani Tarf and having five branches: 'al-'Ana-figa (9 branches), Kutayr (3 branches), 'an-Nassar (2 branches) and Bani Sala descending from Bani Tamin (9 branches). Salamat is one of the branches of 'al-Bawiya (3 branches), Bayt Sa'd (9 branches), Hamid (7 branches), as-Sarifaat (2 branches), Bani Tamim (13 branches), 'az-Zarkan (5 branches), 'al-'Akras (3 branches) and over 24 Arab tribes dispersed among the 13 mentioned above.

9 - Rodinson, M., The Arabs. P.U.F., Paris, 1979, p. 76.

10 - Dairat al-Ma'arif al Islam/yah, (Islamic Encyclopedia), I. Khuzestan Article, page 38

11 - Massignon, Op.Cit., p. 388

12 - Massignon, Op.Cit..p.388

13 - Called the :enlightened Caliph”.

14 - Shibr, Jasem Hassan. Tarikh al-Moucha'chi'in (History of the Moucha'chi'in) Baghdad, 1954.

Khazaal, Khalaf Tarikh Kuwait as-siyasi, (Political History of Kuwait)III, Beirut,1963,p.90

15 - The Travels of Pedro Teiskeira: "Kings of Harmuz" and excerpts from "Kings of Persia" Hakluyt Society, 1902.

16 - The Trvels of Sig. Pietro Della Valle to the East Indies and the Arabian Desert, Hakluyt Society, 1902.

17 - Massignon, L.Op.Cit.

18 - Curzon, Georges N. Persia and the Question.LL. London. 1892.p.323.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT :

THE MODERN PERIOD

ENTRY OF THE EUROPEAN POWERS INTO THE GULF

Historically, the European powers intervened very early in the Gulf and did not fail to take advantage of the different contradictions that thrived in this region.

1. Portuguese domination

In the 16th century, the Gulf region underwent the domination of Portugal, the penetration of which was facilitated by an alliance concluded between Lisbon and Persia. The agreement reached during the reign of Shah Ismail as-Safawi allowed both allies to establish a boycott policy towards Arab navigation and trade.

2. Ottoman occupation

In 1546, the Ottoman expansion attained Basra in order to defeat the Portuguese and thwart their alliance with the Persians. Despite Arab support of the Ottomans, Arabistan remained under Portuguese domination, whereas Basra was won over by the Ottomans. Portugal's control of Arabistan continued up until 1652, at which time a struggle between English and Dutch influence took over.

3. Rivalry between Holland and Great Britain

Between 1580 and 1640, when Spain annexed Portugal, England and Holland made their entry into the Gulf; England thus intended to reinforce the security of its communication route towards India. With respect to Holland, its aims were chiefly commercial. "The English made Bandar Abbas the headquarters for their activities. As early as 1635 the English vessels traded with Basra in spite of Dutch competition." (1) This rivalry grew stronger and led to a war between the two countries in 1652. The East Indies Company was about to close its branch offices when Louis XIV, King of France, inflicted such a grave defeat on Holland that it became powerless to protect its interests in the Arab Gulf. (2)

4. Napoleon and the Persians

Between 1793 and 1809, France negotiated a treaty making Persia its ally in the Gulf. However, the French were not able to implant themselves in that area. The Arab tribes conserved their autonomy in Arabistan and Shatt-al-Arab. Since England feared a French advance towards India, it strengthened its presence in the Gulf and opened consulates in the different countries of that region.

5. Clash between Russians and British

The English domination did not last long before being shared, for Russia was on the look-out for any weakening of the Persian Empire. Indeed, Peter the Great had declared to his army earlier:

As soon as you feel the Persian Empire weakening, do not hesitate to invade it through to the Gulf, and from there, if you are able, continue all the way to the Indies where all the treasures of the world are to be found. (3)

The first Russian interventions in the Gulf date from 1838. Saint Petersburg encouraged the Persian Empire to take hold of the city of Herat which represented an important stronghold for the English on the route to the Indies. (4) Thus, Russia continued to play an active role in the region, interfering in border conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and Persia. The defeat of Russia in 1907 by Japan brought St. Petersburg to conclude a treaty with the English. The Russian influence was confined to the north of Persia. This country thus found itself exposed to two influences: Russian to the north, English to the south. By the terms of the 1907 treaty, Arabistan was to conserve its autonomy. (5)

6. Discovery of Oil

England was given an exceptional advantage in the region when it obtained, against a moderate sum (some twenty thousand pounds sterling), an authorization from the Shah to undertake research for oil deposits on the Iranian territory. This research was begun as early as 1902 and led to the discovery of the "Bir Soleyman" well in 1908. Naturally, this discovery had the effect of sharpening the imperialist rivalries in that area.

7. German Interference

At the beginning of the 20th century, Germany was transformed into a power with designs on the Orient. It developed commercial relations with Basra, Moham-marah (Khorramshahr) and Ahwaz. The appearance of a third European power in the Gulf jeopardized the existing balance between the Russians and the English. It also pushed these two countries into taking somewhat the same side.

Before treating the modern period of Arabistan, the history that has unfolded over four centuries with its succession of events must first be examined. The modern era actually begins with the settlement of the Bani Kaab tribe, which inaugurated an epoch of economic prosperity and political autonomy in Arabistan and the Shatt-al-Arab.

THE POWER OF THE BANI KAAB : FIRST PERIOD

The Bani Kaab makes up a tribe of Arab Bedouins having settled in Arabistan. The historian Al-Kalkashandi points out that the Bani Kaab compose one branch of the Amer Bani Sa'sa'a tribe originating from the Arabian Peninsula and having settled in Iraq. (6) All the Bani Kaab, including those established in Arabistan, descended from a common ancestor. (7) These men settled on the two banks of Shatt-al-Arab, devoting themselves to farming and livestock. The city of Kabbann, which was formerly a part of the Ottoman Empire, became the capital of their territory (8) as Louis Massignon has ascertained. "The tribe of the Kaab (pronounced "Tcha'b" in Bedouin), traditionally buffalo tenders, solidly established its preeminence over the region and the supremacy of its chiefs, the hereditary sheikhs of the Al-Bou Nasir, over all others." (9)

Lord Curzon drew up a list of the first Kaab chiefs and in it can be found : Nasir-Ibn Mohammed and his brothers Abdallah, Sarhan, Mir Rahman (1690-1722), then Faraj Allah (1722), Tahmaz Ben Khanfar (1732), Bander (1735), Salman (1737-1766), Osman (1737-1764), Ghanim (1766), Barakat (1770), Ghadban (1782), Moubarek (1792), Paris (1794), Alwan (1795), Barakat II (1801), Geith (1812), Mobadir (1828), Abdallah II (1831), Thamr (1837), Faris II (1840), Loutfallah, Mohammed Khan, Rahman and Mir Abdallah Djafar Khan (deposed in 1881 then restored to power in 1889). (10)

The historians who have dealt with the development of the Bani Kaab Emirate point out the rapidity of its territorial expansion. Taking advantage of the conflict between the

Persians and the Ottomans over the possession of their territory, the Sheikhs of the Emirate gradually asserted their autonomy and brought law and order to their lands. Persians and Ottomans were finally obliged to accept the situation, and opened relations with the Bani Kaab.

Soon the Emirate procured itself a fleet which by the XVIIIth century became one of the most important in the Gulf. This fleet allowed the Bani Kaab to strengthen their autonomy and extend their influence to the Shatt-al-Arab islands and Basra. (11) Louis Massignon has added further detail :

Throughout the eighteenth century their politics [of the Bani Kaab], which remained identical despite a few bloody outbreaks over successions, consisted in conserving the alliance of the Turks, who were ever ready for any retreat on the part of the Persian government. (12)

THE REIGN OF SHEIKH SALMAN BEN SULTAN OR THE GOLDEN AGE OF ARABISTAN

The Shatt-al-Arab region witnessed remarkable progress under the reign of Sheikh Salman Ben Sultan (1737-1767). The Bani Kaab became the masters of the region : no ship was able to penetrate into the Shatt-al-Arab without having paid them navigation duties. Sheikh Salman so consolidated the fleet of this emirate that it could rival with that of the Ottoman Empire. "It was thus able to extend its power from Abadan Island to the city of Bushire as well as all along the coast of Oman in the Arabian Gulf." (13) The power of Sheikh Salman worried the Persian Empire, which made unsuccessful attempts to defeat it militarily ; similarly, the Ottomans were forced to incline before the power of Salman who not only refused to pay the dues forcibly imposed upon the emirs of this region, but also cut off Iraq's access to Shatt-al-Arab.

The English then attacked the Bani Kaab forces, whose "reputation of bravery had attained Europe by that period". (14) They believed that this Arab force represented "a threat to their commercial interests in the form of the East Indies Company. That was the first military intervention of the English in Shatt-al-Arab and Arabistan. Sheikh Salman succeeded in repelling the fleet sent to attack his forces". (15)

This series of successes of the Bani Kaab consolidated their sovereignty over Arabistan and allowed them to form close relations with the other Arab tribes of the Gulf, particularly those of Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman. (16)

At the death of Sheikh Salman in 1767, Karim Khan, Emperor of the Persians, proposed an alliance with the Bani Kaab, which in reality signified recognition of the autonomy acquired by this tribe. (17)

THE DIVISION OF THE BANI KAAB AND THE BIRTH OF MOHAMMARAH

The Bani Kaab split into two clans when Sheikh Mardaw Ben Ali of the Bou-Kasseb tribe gave his authorization for Emir Hajj Youssef Ben Mardaw to settle at the mouth of the Karun River. In 1812 the Emir built the city of Mohammarah (Khorramshahr), provoking a division of the Bani Kaab into two clans: some members of the tribe, the Abou Nasser, remained at Felahiyah (Chadkan) and others, under the name of Bou-Kasseb, emigrated to Mohammarah.

Incidents broke out between the two factions of Bani Kaab, to the advantage of the Bou-Kasseb. Hajj Jaber Bou-Kasseb was able, however, to restore the unity of the Bani Kaab under his leadership. Due to him, Mohammarah expanded into the south of Iraq and to the Shatt-al-Arab.

Before going on, the causes of the division of the Bani Kaab should be brought to mind :

- a) The Persian Monarchs had not forgotten the double defeat of Thi-Qar (18) and Qadisiyah inflicted on them by the Arabs. For this reason, they were constantly trying to take advantage of any weakness manifested by their neighbors.
- b) The Bani Kaab tribes had preserved their ties with the Ottoman Empire. They paid exorbitant duties to the Pacha of Baghdad. Furthermore, official documents attest that the territories in which the Bani Kaab were implanted were under Ottoman "suzerainty". (19) Finally, this region had made a pledge of allegiance to the Ottomans at the time of the Iraqi conquest. (20)
- c) The decline of the Bani Kaab Emirate was precipitated by an internal conflict whose importance was aggravated by the antagonism between Persians and Ottomans.

The region of Arabistan and Shatt-al-Arab became the object of a ferocious struggle between the two empires, which took turns occupying it. Arabistan and Shatt-al-Arab thus resemble a Middle Eastern Alsace-Lorraine : a land coveted and fiercely disputed by the surrounding countries. This conflict continued through several centuries. Between the 16th and 18th centuries it was punctuated with a series of agreements the most notable of which follow.

PRINCIPLE AGREEMENTS

- Omassiyah (1541)

Between 1508 and 1514 the Persians occupied territories beyond their boundaries, notably, the Shatt-al-Arab. This region was, however, liberated by Sultan Ottoman Selim I. In 1529, profiting from the weakness of Soleiman Al-Kanouni, the Persians took it

back until 1542 when, following the signature of the Omassiyah treaty, they were forced to cede it to the Ottomans. (21) Other agreements were to follow :

• **Qasr - Shirin (1639)**

In 1623, the Persians took over Shatt-al-Arab, occupying it for fifteen years. In 1639, Sultan Ottoman Mourad IV obliged the Persians to sign the Qasr -Shirin treaty by which the Safawid Empire recognized that Iraq and the Shatt-al-Arab belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

• **Amir Achraf (1727) and Nader Shah (1747)**

At the beginning of the 18th century, the occupation of the Hawizah area by the Persians triggered new conflicts with the Ottomans, ended in 1727 by the Amir Achraf treaty, article 7 of which stipulates : "because of its contiguity with Basra, the region of Hawizah located within Iraqi territory will be occupied definitively by the Ottoman Empire ; the Persian Empire commits itself not to intervene in the internal affairs of Arabistan". This clause was reiterated in the Nader Shah treaty (1747) which ended further hostilities between the two states.

• **Ard Roun (Erzeroum) I (1823)**

The border zone remained relatively calm until 1818, during which the Persians again unsuccessfully attacked. After merciless warfare a new protocol was signed, that is, the famous treaty of Ard Roun (1823), reconfirming that the entire Shatt-al-Arab region belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

• **Ard Roun II (1847) (22)**

The appetite of the Persians, motivated by the strategic interest of this region, was whetted by the attitude of the native tribes. Indeed, the Bani Kaab were desirous of preserving their autonomy, so taking advantage of the rivalry between the Persian and Ottoman Empires, they swung from alliance with one power to alliance with the other. This policy succeeded until the Turks decided to throw all their forces into the balance: a huge army was sent by Istanbul, which occupied not only Arabistan but also pursued the Persian forces to the Zagros Mountains. Only the opening of new negotiations allowed Persia to avoid fighting in order to prevent the fall of Teheran. England and Russia, which then upheld the Persian Empire, imposed their mediation between the two parties. (23) A mixed commission representing the four countries was set up to solve the conflict. This commission met for three years. During their investigations, hostilities again broke out. In 1843, Najib Pacha attacked the Persians. The second treaty of Ard Roun (Erzeroum) was concluded May 31, 1847 between the Ottoman Sultan Abdul-Majid and the Persian Shah Mohammed. For the first time, the Ottoman Empire retreated from Shatt-al-Arab, the western part of which was ceded to Persia. Article 2 of this agreement stipulates that "the Ottoman Empire recognizes the rights of the Persian Empire over the city of Mohammarah (Khorramshahr) and its port, over Khodr Island (Abadan), as well

as over the territories found on the east bank of Shatt-al-Arab". The two parties agreed to set their boundaries on the east bank of these straits, placing these waters under the total sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire. The scope of this agreement remained theoretical, however, for several reasons:

- a) The first is that the native tribes were not consulted beforehand, while their attitude in the past had often provoked or revived the conflict between Persians and Ottomans.
- b) In both its terms and its effects, the treaty accorded the Persian Empire merely partial annexation of the Shatt-al-Arab. In reality, this region conserved its autonomy with respect to Teheran.
- c) The Shatt-al-Arab tribes contested the clauses of the May 31, 1847 treaty relative to their territory.
- d) Finally, the Persian Parliament did not ratify this treaty. Teheran judged its territorial gains as insufficient, demanding the whole region of Shatt-al-Arab, Arabistan and even Iraq. (24)

Despite these difficulties, the commission, composed of Russian, English, Persian and Turkish representatives and charged with bringing the Ard Roum Treaty into effect, proceeded to define the boundaries, especially under British impulsion, for its representatives demonstrated much zeal in accomplishing this task. (25) Finally, the commission met in 1850 and 1851 in Baghdad and in Mohammarah, but it was unable to conclude any protocol due to continuing divergences between the parties. The outbreak of the Anglo-Persian War in 1854 ended its mission. March 26, 1857, the English army led by Sir James Outram launched an attack against Mohammarah and occupied it with the help of Sultan Ottoman. Negotiations were begun with the latter concerning the possible retrocession of Mohammarah to Baghdad. (26) However, before these talks ended, the Paris Treaty (1857) was signed, obliging the British army to retreat from the territories seized from Persia. (27) Discussions over the definition of boundaries in the Shatt-al-Arab and Arabistan, included in the 1847 treaty, were re-launched in 1865. After four years of fruitless negotiations, it was decided that the contested territories would remain under the control of the state occupying them de facto. In fact, this agreement did not resolve anything. In the next years, Shatt-al-Arab and Arabistan became the theater of new incidents. The region nevertheless remained under Arab control.

• The Protocol of Constantinople (1913)

In 1912, the Protocol of Teheran was finally concluded in annex to the Ard Roum Treaty, and was completed by another signed November 17, 1913. (28) The most important clauses of this protocol were the following:

1. Khodr Island, its port and the small islands located near Abadan were taken from the Ottoman Empire, passing over to Persian control.

2. The riverside boundaries of the Shatt-al-Arab were set upon its left bank, from the locality of Nahr Abul-Arabid to the sea.

3. The Persian government abandoned its claims on the city of Sulaymaniyah.

The clauses regarding neighborly relations, navigation, trade and exchange of persons were identical to those of the previous agreements.

The Ard Roun Treaty raises two points:

1. One fraction of the Bani Kaab territory was attached to the Persian Empire, which constituted an undeniable violation of the will of these tribes, above all desiring the preservation of their autonomy. (29)

2. Aside from the constant covetousness of Persia, the Ottoman retreat from this region can be explained by the permanent resistance of the inhabitants to its authority.

Negotiations on the implementing of the 1913 protocol were to be interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War. Iraq was to accede to the statute of independence. The Shatt-al-Arab should incontestably have been considered as an integral part of its territory. The 1913 protocol added nothing to the second Ard Roun Treaty other than a clause conferring to the Sheikh of Mohammarah full rights over the region of Arabistan. This constituted an indirect recognition of the Arab character of that territory by the Persians and the Ottomans. Because of it, the Shatt-al-Arab was to live another period of autonomy starting with Hajj Jaber Mardaw and ending with Sheikh Khazaal.

THE POWER OF THE BANI KAAB: SECOND PERIOD

As mentioned above, the Kaab tribes split up into two clans, namely, Al-Boukasseb and Al-Bounasser, at the beginning of the 18th century. The former settled on the Karun River and their first chief, Hajj Youssef Ben Mardaw, founded Mohammarah in 1812.

• The reign of Jaber ben Mardaw

In 1837, at the moment he took over, the Sheikh of Sheikhs, Kaab Thamr, attributed the title of governor of Mohammarah to Hajj Jaber Mardaw, the son of Hajj Youssef. In reality, the exercise of that power indisputably conferred to Jaber by the Ard Roun Treaty did not prove to be comfortable. Hajj Jaber, whose capital was Mohammarah, while he resided in Basra (30), was troubled by intertribal wars. He confined himself to an attitude of neutrality while maintaining good relations with both Persians and Ottomans, and notably with the Walis of Baghdad. It was the Persians who first had need of him to quell diverse tribes. Before going into this point, however, it would be useful to recall the words of Louis Massignon explaining the three reasons for the commercial importance of Mohammarah:

A first reason is that for Mohammarah, merchandise brought by vessels of the high sea by way of the Shatt must be transported by the lighter Karun boats. The second is that the oriental canals bringing merchandise directly from India to Ahwaz by Abadan and Dawraq (Felahiyah) are no longer kept up, so that the only entry route by fluvial navigation is by the Shatt at al-Faw. The third is that Mohammarah is a region less unhealthy and richer in resources than the eastern delta, for it benefits from its proximity to the Shatt and from the loam after flooding. (31)

The tribe which made the most trouble for Hajj Jaber was that of the Rabi'ah, representing a true threat. Hajj Jaber thus turned to an ancient Arab diplomatic practice: he married Noura, the daughter of the chief of the Rabi'ah, Sheikh Talal, in order to appease the opposition of that tribe. One son, Sheikh Khazaal, was born from this union, to become the last emir of autonomous Arabistan. (32)

The permanent conflict opposing Ottomans and Persians, the weakening of these empires, as well as the intelligent diplomacy of Sheikh Jaber would cause Nasser Eddine Chah, ten years after the Ard Roun Treaty, to make of Arabistan an independent emirate governed by Hajj Jaber. By the terms of the imperial decree, it was provided that:

1 - The Emirate of Mohammarah was to be governed by Hajj Jaber and subsequently by his descendants;

2 - Customs were to depend upon the Emirate Administration;

3 - The Shah was to promise not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Emirate. (33)

Once his position was recognized, Hajj Jaber could devote his efforts to the development of the emirate. He followed his traditional policies, such as maintaining good relations with Iraq and expanding navigation in the Shatt-al-Arab. Among his plans for development figured the widening of the Karun River so as to render it fully navigable from its mouth to the port of Tustar in northwest Arabistan. Despite their interest for the emirate's economic development, Hajj Jaber turned down propositions made by England in exchange for the right for its ships to navigate freely upon this river. In this way, Hajj Jaber intended to avoid creating any jealousy likely to invite external intrusions into his territory and thus conserve his autonomy. The politics of Sheikh Jaber were also correctly analyzed by Louis Massignon:

Hajj Jaber wisely and successfully led the gradual climb of his clan to the rank of tribe and of Mohammarah, his residence as chief of the clan, to the rank of capital of a principality... He succeeded in getting the sanction of the Persian Government for his rupture with Sheikh Al-Mashai'k of Felahiyah by obtaining directly from the court of Teheran his investiture over the city of Mohammarah. (34)

Massignon continued with this judgment of Miza'al, the son and successor of Hajj Jaber :

He was to continue his father's policy toward the Persian court, from which he obtained the quite enviable title of "Mo'iyar as Sultanah" in 1889, in exchange for his promise to pay an annual tribute. He had the first palace of Feiliyeh constructed on a lateral canal perpendicular to Shatt-al-Arab.

Bloodshed over succession

It was in this palace that in 1897 tragedy occurred:

Sheikh Miza'al had three living brothers: Mohammed, his elder, Khazaal and Salman, his younger brothers. Miza'al, by nature rather gentle according to his contemporaries, had since some time become suspicious, no longer holding his two counselors, the Persian Katib Mollah Hassan and the emir of his personal guard. Sheikh Abdallah, in full confidence. It is said that one day he was overtaken by a fear of ambush and had the tallest trees surrounding his palace pruned or cut down. On several occasions he had been warned about the activities of his younger brother Khazaal. The latter was arrested, released, then assigned to residence within the palace. These contradictory measures reflected the hesitations of Miza'al. At the end, the tragedy exploded. That day, while the English steamboat "Malamir" of the Karun River service was just leaving Mohammarah, Khazaal and Sheikh Abdallah slipped into the palace, found Miza'al and assassinated him. In the struggle to master the situation, the conspirators were obliged to kill another fifteen of Miza'al's servants. In the scuffle, the King's belt of gold with a diamond buckle disappeared. It was the symbol of the principality for the people, and Khazaal was so infuriated that he had the head of Miza'al cut off. In the meantime, the wives of the dead man burst into the room. They threw themselves upon the corpse and Khazaal let them

take him away to be buried decently. Before nightfall, as news of the murder was spreading, the first of Khazaal's edicts was promulgated in

Mohammarah: any funeral ceremony intended for Miza'al was prohibited. (35)

After a moment of emotion, stirred a second time by the unanimous refusal of Miza'al's harem to become that of his murderer, daily life became normal again in Mohammarah. The golden belt "rediscovered" and returned to Khazaal by his brother's wives sealed the reconciliation between them and the new Sheikh. It is hence that Sheikh Khazaal, conferred the official title of "Mo'izz Assaltanah wa Sirdar Arafi" according to protocol, became the absolute master of Mohammarah; (36) Khazaal immediately seized Miza'al's heir, Aboud, who was trying to plot against him, had him blinded with a bayonet, then imprisoned.

SHEIKH KHAZAAL, LAST OF THE BANI KAAB EMIRS

It is certain that the reign of Sheikh Khazaal was capital to the history of Arabistan. After the discovery of oil, the western powers found themselves newly interested in this region and events and conflicts were both amplified. The First World War was to modify the equilibrium of the region: some regimes crumbled as that of Iran, where the Qadjars were supplanted by the Pahlavis, who then attacked the Arab government of Arabistan.

• Proclamation of Independence of Mohammarah (1902)

In the manner of Hajy Jaber, Sheikh Khazaal established excellent relations with the neighboring states. He was thereby enabled to lessen Persian pressure on his territory. (37) Taking advantage of the system of alliances and the balance of forces in the region, Sheikh Khazaal was able to lead his emirate to independence. In this undertaking, the assistance of the British proved first to be precious, then destructive. In fact, after having come to his aid, London abandoned Sheikh Khazaal to the hands of his adversaries. At this period, Persia was considerably weakened by the joint attacks of Russia to the north and England to the south. The Anglo-Persian conflict was exploited by Khazaal who created close links with the English in order to ensure the independence of his principality. The creation of an autonomous and powerful emirate facing Persia was in keeping with the strategic views of London, which consequently gave its support to Sheikh Khazaal. Once the oil deposits were discovered, and Russia was engaged to construct a railway line between Teheran and Arabistan, England recognized the independence of Mohammarah (in 1902) and concluded a treaty of military assistance (1905) with Sheikh Khazaal. Moreover, England made sure that neither the Ottoman Empire nor the Arab leaders of the region interfered in the internal affairs of Arabistan. By means of this alliance, Sheikh Khazaal protected himself from both Persia and the Ottoman Empire. In this respect, however, it must be noted that the relations between Arabistan and the government of Baghdad were in general harmonious. Were there not Arab populations to be found on either side of the frontier?

The end of the First World War was marked by the triumph of the Russian Revolution. Moscow temporarily disappeared from the Gulf scene, as did the Ottoman Empire and the other powers. England remained as practically the sole controlling force in this region deliberately described by Western observers as a "British lake". (38)

The development of the international situation led England to conclude a treaty with Wasouk, the Prime Minister of the Persian Empire (August 9, 1919). The aim of this agreement was to secure Teheran against a possible Soviet aggression. Furthermore, England, with the tacit acceptance of the Shah and his government, imposed its supervision over the administrative affairs of Persia. The signing of this document coincided with the dawn of anti-colonial movements in the Middle East, notably that of Reza Khan, who pruned Persian nationalism against both the Qadjar dynasty, considered responsible for the collapse of the Empire, and foreign intervention in this country. Reza Khan was assigned the portfolio of defense in the government of Zia-ud-Din, and then was appointed commander-in-chief of the army. He gave the order to arrest all those responsible for the signature of the 1919 treaty with the English. The divergence between the Prime Minister and Reza Khan brought him to leave the country temporarily. (39) The Soviet leaders, having renewed ties with Persia, thought of Reza Khan as a nationalist and revolutionary, and hardly criticized his authoritarian methods of government. Moscow signed a treaty with Persia in 1921 by which Russia renounced all of the privileges formerly accorded it in Persia, and recognized the independence of that state. In return, Russia demanded and gained from Persia the abolition of all privileges held by the other powers. Consequently, Teheran abrogated its 1919 treaty with England. The Soviets opened a consulate in Arabistan. England then reinforced its support of Sheikh Khazaal and advised him to avoid any contact with the Russian Consul. In 1921-1922, Reza Khan attempted to reduce the dissidence having overrun the north of Persia. He then turned against Arabistan.

• Persian occupation of Arabistan

When Sheikh Khazaal became conscious of the danger, he tried to take precautions against the aims of Reza Khan. He tried to break out of the isolation imposed by Great Britain by seeking the support of the Persian tribes implanted on the periphery of the emirate. He came into contact with Youssef Khan, the Bakhtiarian chief (the tribe from which Chapour Bakhtiar, latest Prime Minister of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, originated), with Golam Reza Khan, Governor of Bachtakwa, as well as with Moujahed Khan Emir of Luristan, and made an alliance with them against Reza Khan. Sheikh Khazaal was appointed head of this coalition (40), the headquarters of which were in Arabistan. The allies of Sheikh Khazaal obtained the support of the Shah exiled in Paris. These events incited Reza Khan to crush this opposition and occupy Arabistan, qualifying it as a "place of turpitude and a threat for the whole Persian Empire". The declarations of Sheikh Khazaal, calling him an "enemy of Islam, usurper of the power in Persia", (41) sharpened his irritation.

Reza Khan and his army started to march on Arabistan via the Isfahan and Shiraz route. England tried in vain to stop him by pretending that Sheikh Khazaal was under its

protection. The British Ambassador addressed a letter to Reza Khan enumerating all the interests of Great Britain and justifying its politics in this region. The contents of that letter even today might allow a better understanding of the sensitivity of Europe and the United States regarding the question of oil:

Besides the political and strategic interest of this region, Great Britain holds a particular interest — vital to the English people — in the oil reserves. On the other hand, as you know, the oil pipe-lines extend the length of the Karun River; it is feasible that in case of conflict with the forces of Sheikh Khazaaal military operations would cause damage to these pipe-lines. England will consider the Persian State as solely responsible for any damages. In that event, it will be obliged to intervene directly and rapidly so as to defend its interests and those of the petroleum companies. (42)

This warning did not stop Reza Khan in his undertaking. As for Sheikh Khazaaal, he had to content himself with the purely diplomatic assistance of England. The latter was careful to preserve its weighty interests in Persia and thus abstained from giving material support to the Emirate of Arabistan. Furthermore, direct English intervention against Persia would have undoubtedly had the effect of throwing that state into the arms of the Soviets. When the Persian army entered Arabistan, Sheikh Khazaaal proceeded to make a just evaluation of the forces at play, thereby realizing the imbalance which existed between the military obsolescence of the tribes and the modern army of Persia. Taking care to avoid the destruction of his country (43), he accepted to negotiate with Reza Khan. He did not do this himself, using the pretext of his poor state of health, but charged his son Abdel Karim to discuss the future of the Emirate. (44) Sheikh Khazaaal entrusted his son with a letter for Reza Khan in which he explained the reason for his dissidence and pledged submission to the Persian powers. Nevertheless, Reza Khan continued to march. He made his entrance into Mohammarah and occupied Arabistan village by village. He also took over Al-Ahwaz and the palace of Sheikh Khazaaal in which he established his headquarters. When Sheikh Khazaaal was able to encounter Reza Khan, the latter appeared cordial and indulgent. He assured him that he would not jeopardize his position.

• The fall of Sheikh Khazaaal

In Mohammarah, Sheikh Khazaaal invited Reza Khan to his Palace in Feiliyeh and accompanied him on a tour through the Emirate. Before leaving Arabistan, Reza Khan set up a military government directed by Fadlallah Khan Zahidi. This officer stayed on good terms with Sheikh Khazaaal and tried in vain to convince him to visit Teheran; a trap was then set for him.

While Sheikh Khazaaal was in Basra, General Zahidi pretended to have received an order to pull out of the region ; he left Al-Ahwaz and took the direction of Mohammarah. He informed Sheikh Khazaaal of this departure. The Sheikh requested confirmation of this news from the British representative in Al-Ahwaz, who reassured him. A reception was planned for the departure of General Zahidi, which was supposed to take place on the private yacht of Sheikh Khazaaal anchored in the Shatt-al-Arab facing the Emir's palace.

Khazaal sent for his son in Basra so that he could attend the reception. A few hours prior to it, a detachment of the Persian army came on board and proceeded to arrest Sheikh Khazaal and his son, who were deported to Mohammarah, then Al-Ahwaz and finally to Teheran. (45)

April 30, 1925 thus marks the end of the independent Arab government of Arabistan. Jean-Jacques Berreby has commented upon the occupation of Arabistan by the Persians in these terms: "The error of Sheikh Khazaal was that his emirate was located in a strategic area of the oil world which knows neither laws nor rights." (46)

Shortly afterwards, the Iranian government published a so-called declaration signed by Sheikh Khazaal in which it was indicated that:

1. The Emir of Arabistan, Sheikh Khazaal, abdicated in favor of his son Jasseb.
2. Iran had the right to oversee the internal affairs of Arabistan.
3. Arabistan nullified all of its international agreements, except those reached with Persia.

A lot has been written about the reign of Sheikh Khazaal over the Emirate of Arabistan; the observers' judgments are in great contrast, going from elaborate praise to unconditional condemnation. It is thus that Amin Arrihani, for example, considered him as "the oldest of kings, as having the reputation of most qualified and as the most generous among them". (47) On the contrary, Louis Massignon esteemed that "he took up the life of his predecessors: long days spent napping the day long in his diwan, barely heeding the reports of his secretaries and agents; nights reserved for the harem, a life of indolence interrupted from time to time by hasty skirmishes with rebels, times when he would recover the artfulness and energy of old". (48)

As for Reza Khan, he became master of the country; the Parliament definitively proclaimed the deposition of Shah Ahmed, who was sojourning in Paris. A new Iranian constitution was drawn up and adopted in December 1925. Reza Pahlavi became Shah in April 1926, thus inaugurating a new period in Iranian history.

Notes

- (1) Akkad, Salah : "Colonialism and Oil in the Arab Gulf." International Political Review, n° 8, Cairo, April 8, 1967, p. 32 (Arabic).
- (2) Curzon, Op. Cit., p. 535.
- (3) Sykes, Sir Percy, Op. Cit., p. 254.
- (4) Rowlinson H., England and Russia in the East. London, 1875, p. 13.
- (5) Curzon, Russia in Central Asia, p. 378 ; and Najjar M.A., Political History of Arabistan 1897/IV25. Dar Al-Ma'aref Cairo, 1971. p. 188.
- (6) Al-Kalkashandi, Abul-Ahhas Ahmad. "ʿIlm al-ʿArab wa-Matariq al-ʿArab" (Knowledge of the Arab Ancestors). Cairo. 1959, p. 329.
- (7) Al-Awliyya Abbas, The History of Iraq between two <>« Khilafas, VIII, Baghdad, 1956. p. 38 (Arabic).
- (8) Lorimers J.G., Op. Cit., I, Calcutta, p. 1627.
- (9) Massignon L., Op. Cit.
- (10) Curzon, Ibid., p. 324
- (11) Mohammed Abdul-Amir. Maritime forces in the Arabian Gulf during the XVIIIth century, Baghdad, 1966. p. 41.
- (12) Massignon L.. Op. Cit.
- (13) Khazal, H.K.. Political History of Kuwait. I, p. 49.
- (14) Berryne J., Op. Cit., p. 173.
- (15) Wilson, Op. Cit., p. 128.
- (16) Najjar, Moustapha Abdel, Op. Cit.. p. 37.
- (17) Wilson, Op. Cit., p. 168.
- (18) Thi-Qar is an Iraqi Department, wherein a famous battle between Arabs and Persians once occurred before that of Qadisiyah. This stirring Arab victory was praised by the Prophet Mohammed.
- (19) Darwish. Bacha. Report on the demarcation of "Iraqi-Iranian frontiers", Baghdad, 1953, pp. 3-5 (Arabic).

- (20) Garabiyya, Abdul-Karim, Introduction to the Modern History of Arabia, I, Damascus, 1960, p. 106.
- (21) For more details, cf. Zabet Chaker, International relations and border agreements between Iraq and Iran, p. 29 on.
- (22) Cf. Integral text in Appendix V (p. 181).
- (23) Nawar, Abdul Aziz, Modern History of Iraq, Cairo, 1968, p. 333 (Arabic).
- (24) Husni, Abdl-Razzak, Modern Political History of Iraq, III, Sidon, 1957, p. 327 (Arabic).
- (25) James (Felix Jones), Narrative of a journey to the frontier of Turkey and Persia, through a part of Kurdistan. Submitted to the government on August 16, 1848. Selections from Bombay Government record n° XLIII New Series, pp. 135-213.
- (26) Akkad, Salah, p. 161.
- (27) Broklman, Karl, History of the Muslim Peoples. IV, Beirut, 1955, p. 166 (Arabic translation by Mounir Baalbaki and Nabil Paris).
- (28) Cf. Appendix VI (p. 193) for integral text of the 1913 Protocol.
- (29) Najjar M., Ibid., pp. 63-64.
- (30) An-Nabhani, Al-Tuhfat Al-Nabhaniyyah, IX. Cairo. 1342 H., p. 31 (Arabic).
- (31) Massignon, L., Op. Cit.
- (32) This contradicts the opinion of Massignon, who described the mother of Khazaal as Persian. Cf. H.K. Khazaal, Op. cit., p. 99.
- (33) Intaki, Abdul-Massih, The Vol\if-f of Kina Hn.i.scin to the Nile Volley, Cairo, 1917, p. 207 (Arabic).
- (34) Massignon, L.<)/>. ('it.
- (35) Massignon, L., Op. Cit.
- (36) Az-Zarkali, al-A'lam (The Precursors), II, Cairo, 1954, p. 350.
- (37) Memoirs of Reza Shah, translated by Ali al-Basri, Baghdad, 1950, p. 28.
- (38) Khazaal H.K., Op. Cit.. p. 195.

- (39) Memoirs of Reza Shah, Op. cit., pp. 41 and 83.
- (40) Called "Coalition as Sa'adah" (Coalition of Happiness).
- (41) Memoirs of Reza Shah, Op. cit., p. 41.
- (42) Memoirs of Reza Shah, Op. cit., p. 83.
- (43) Hachimi, Mohammed, The Three Heroes. Baghdad, 1937, p. 81.
- (44) Item
- (45) Sheikh Khazal died in Teheran in 1936.
- (46) Berrehy J.-J., The Arabian Gulf, p. 111.
- (47) Ar-Rihani, Amin. Moulouk Al-Arab (The Arab Kings). II, Beirut, 1951, p. 186.
- (48) Massignon, L., Op. Cit.

CHAPTER 5

RESISTANCE OF ARABISTAN TO THE PERSIAN OCCUPATION

THE COLONIZATION OF ARABISTAN

After occupying Arabistan, Iran modified the name of this territory in calling it Khuzestan, in an attempt to deprive it of everything that made it Arab. Moreover, the Iranian authorities prevented the Arab language from being taught there. However, "events have shown that most of the tribes living in these regions refused to collaborate with the Persian authorities". (1)

The measures taken by the Persian authorities against the rights of the Arab people of Arabistan can be resumed as follows:

- 1) Arabistan was considered as the 10th province of Iran. A military governor was appointed to head the administration of this region; meanwhile, the existing Arab institutions (political, administrative and judiciary) were suppressed.
- 2) Several military bases and barracks were put up in the region of Arabistan. This "militarization" of the administration proves that the Persian presence was foreign in the

eyes of the native population. It is for this reason that the Arab people of Arabistan never stopped claiming its right to liberation and independence.

3) An area of 9,800 sq. miles of Arabistan was definitively joined to Persia. Arab tribes were forcibly transferred to northern Iran and replaced by a population of Persian origin. This policy is identical to that practiced by "The Union and Progress Committee" (U.P.C.), in power just before the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the aim of which was to forcefully render Turkish the Arab population then under its domination. This policy was and still is racist and anti-Arab.

4) The localities, cities, rivers and mountains of Arabistan changed designations under the Persian occupation. Persian names were attributed to them.

5) The Iranian government forbade the use of Arabic in the local courts, thus largely blocking the access of Arab citizens to jurisprudence. Later, the Shah gave the order to purge the Persian language of its Arab terms. Despite these maneuvers, Arabic has remained the first language used by the inhabitants of Arabistan. Furthermore, among other decisions concerning the region, the Iranian Cabinet suppressed the teaching of Arabic, ordered the closing of private schools which teach this language and prohibited its use in official acts. Orders were given that passports were no longer to be issued to Arab citizens wishing to continue their studies in the Arab countries. One exception was made for Saudi Arabia for the duration of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. Passports were delivered only for that country and for one month, and the trip had to be made by plane.

6) The Persians represent only a tiny minority within the overall population of Arabistan. However, they have monopolized the administrative jobs as well as those of the diverse productive sectors and services. The Cabinet blocked access to the civil service, the army and the security forces to all Arabs. There was no other choice remaining for the region's inhabitants than to work in farming or fishing or as Dockers at the ports of Arabistan.

7) The Iranian government promulgated a law by which the Arab tribes were dispossessed of their properties which were then placed under the authority of the regime's military governor. An agrarian reform was passed somewhat later, "legalizing" the expropriation of the Arab farmers, whose lands were distributed to Persian peasants. No Arab was allowed to acquire farmland without previous authorization accorded by the Iranian Cabinet.

8) Even the most elementary sanitary infrastructure is lacking in this region; the hospitals are insufficient in number and poor in equipment.

9) The Persian government authorized all members of the police and the army to arbitrarily arrest any Arab citizen, thus creating a climate of terror and oppression in Arabistan.

10) Arab books found in either bookshops or individual homes were confiscated.

11) In the region of Al-Hawizah and those regions adjacent to the Iraqi province of Missan, the water irrigating the lands of the Arab tribes was cut off and diverted toward lands occupied by the Persian population. These practices caused a massive exodus of the Arab population towards the cities for their lands no longer sufficed for their needs.

12) The Iranian government taxed the earnings of the Arab peasants very heavily. The workers, in great majority Arab, were also highly charged.

By these practices, the Persian leaders intended to abolish even the designation of this region, having become "Khuzestan", from the collective memory. Some apparently misinformed observers of today's war between Iraq and Iran have been taken in by this contrivance, such as Eric Rouleau, who has not hesitated to write that "the Iranian Khuzestan has been rebaptized 'Arabistan' by the Ba'athist regime". (2) In fact, as proved by the map reproduced here from an article published in 1908 by Louis Massignon, the most famous French Orientalist, the region is historically known under the name of Arabistan.

Despite all of these discriminatory measures, as well as the terror and torture practiced by the Iranian authorities, they were unable to completely subjugate the Arab population. The insurrections and revolts practically never stopped, for the Arabs pursued their struggle for independence and freedom. The most important Arab revolts having broken out over the last fifty years are the following :

1) The revolt of Sheikh Khazaaal's soldiers on July 22, 1925, that is, three months after the occupation of the region by Persia. This revolt was led by Shalash and Sultan who proclaimed the independence of al-Mohammarah. Yet, the Iranian artillery savagely bombed the city overrun by the rebels, and a great number of them were imprisoned, and then executed.

2) The same year of 1925 saw Sheikh Abdel Mohsen al-Khaqani took the lead of an Arab revolt in al-Mohammarah. This uprising seriously worried the Iranian authorities. The rebels sent two memoranda to Baghdad demanding the independence of Arabistan and the return of Sheikh Khazaaal to the control of his kingdom.

3) In 1928, an insurrection broke out in the region of Al-Hawizah, led by the martyr Mohieddine Az-Ze'baq, Chief of the Shurfa tribes. He was able to form a government which resisted the Persians for six months. The women of Arabistan participated in this revolt.

4) A movement of support of the struggle in Arabistan existed from 1929 to 1939 in Iraq. Directed by Sheikh Hadi Kashef al-Ghata', this association sent a memorandum to the League of Nations. This document requested that a referendum on the self determination of Arabistan be organized.

- 5) In 1940, the Kaab tribe directed by Sheikh Haidar al-Kaabi staged a revolt in the al-Dabis River region, pushing the Persian forces out of the area. The Iranian authorities were unable to crush the uprising until they captured and executed Sheikh al-Kaabi.
- 6) The al-Ghajriyyah rebellion in 1943, under the direction of Sheikh Jasseb, son of Sheikh Khazaal, was upheld by different tribes. The Persian army suffered heavy losses before regaining control of the resistance.
- 7) In 1944, Sheikh Abdallah, son of Sheikh Khazaal, vainly attempted to incite the Arab tribes to revolt, for several tribal chiefs had refused to participate in the insurrection.
- 8) The Bani Tarf rose against the Persians in 1945. Reza Shah seized the occasion to deploy an unprecedented repression against the Arab tribes. He gave the order for sixteen of their chiefs to be buried alive to set an example so as to dissuade the population from other revolts. The members of the Bani Taif tribe were deported to the north of Iran.
- 9) In the same year, the revolt of Sheikh Mazkhour al-Kaabi broke out in the region of Abadan ; the Iranian military barracks were attacked in that city. That revolt was severely repressed.
- 10) When the Arab League was created, the Arabistan problem brought up considerable discussion within the new organization. On February 7, 1946, the tribes of Arabistan submitted a memorandum requesting that the situation in Arabistan be included in the agenda of debates in the Arab League Council. (2) This request was met with fierce opposition on the part of the Egyptian delegate, who justified his position by insisting on family connections between the Iranian and Egyptian dynasties (the Shah had married Fawziyah, the sister of King Farouq). Moreover, also using this tactic the Iraqi representative emphasized the ties of friendship that existed between Abdul-Ilah, regent of the Iraqi Kingdom, with Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. In reality, the question was never dealt with. Nevertheless, the Arabistan tribes addressed another complaint to the Arab League against Iran's methods, expressing their desire to see the Persian occupation ended (August 22, 1946).
- 11) In 1946, the youths of the region created an association for the defense of Arabistan, whose goal was to draw international attention to the problem. The same year, the As-Sa'adah (happiness) party was created with an identical aim. (2)
- 12) In 1956, the rise of Arab unionist and nationalist currents in Syria and Egypt restored hope to Arabistan's inhabitants. At that moment, the first political organization of contemporary Arabistan was created, namely, the Arabistan Liberation Front. From the start, it organized a mass demonstration to support the Egyptian people against the English-French-Israeli attack of 1956.
- 13) The People's Liberation Front of Al-Ahwaz was launched in 1958, advocating armed resistance as the strategy to liberate Arabistan. The Front accounted for over a hundred

military operations against the Persian occupiers. During the struggle against the Iranian authorities, the Front lost 27 of its militants.

14) In 1959, the political organizations of Arabistan held a congress known as the National Congress of Arabistan. It led to the creation of the High National Committee of Arabistan, the objective of which was to continue the struggle against the Persian power. The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 brought support to the militants of Arabistan whose intention was to bring about a general revolt in order to obtain the independence of their province.

15) In 1963, the question was once again submitted to the Arab League Council, but without success. The Arab countries divided themselves into allies and enemies of the Shah's regime. Iraq thus showed itself to be one of the Arab countries that was most attentive to the cause of Arabistan, due to its geographical and historical ties with this region.

16) The Arabistan Liberation Front recommenced its activities after the wave of repression it had undergone in 1964. This decision was taken at a meeting held in Kuwait, after which the party became the National Liberation Front of Arabistan.

17) 1968 saw the creation of the Arab Revolution Movement for the Liberation of Arabistan, but it was dissolved in 1969 upon the initiative of its founders.

ARAB RESISTANCE AFTER THE FALL OF THE SHAH

The Arab struggle grew considerably more intense towards the end of the Shah's reign. Arabistan took an active part in the revolt against the imperial power and contributed to its downfall. They had hoped that by supporting Khomeini and by getting rid of the Shah they would be able to recover their right to freedom and to self-determination. However, when Sheikh Mohammed Al-Khaqani, the representative of Arabistan, came in April 1979 to submit his people's demands to Ayatollah Khomeini in person, the latter refused to receive him. (4)

• *What were these demands?*

1) Recognition of the Arab identity in Iran and its inclusion in the Iranian Constitution (the new Iranian Constitution does not mention this point). (5)

2) Creation of a regional council in Arabistan, an initiative destined to materialize the granting of some autonomy. The council would promulgate all laws necessary to the internal administration of the region.

- 3) Creation of Arab courts whose jurisdiction would handle all disputes between Arab citizens.
- 4) Recognition of Arabic as the second official language of Arabistan (after the Persian language).
- 5) Teaching of Arabic in every primary school.
- 6) Opening of an Arab university in the autonomous zone, responding to the needs of the Arab population.
- 7) Creation of a sufficient amount of jobs for the Arab population.
- 8) Recognition of the freedom of information and press in Arabic.
- 9) Allotment of a part of the earnings derived from Arabistan's oil toward the improvement of this area.
- 10) Possibility for Arab citizens to sign up in the local army and police without discrimination.
- 11) Revision of laws concerning the distribution of land.

• ***What was the result of these demands ?***

- 1) The regime of Khomeini replied to these demands by repression. Even when the population persisted, his answer was a categorical refusal. Arbitrary arrest and execution went on. The religious leader of the Arabistan population, Sheikh Mohammed al-Khaqani, was arrested and confined in Qom, in a place located near the residence of Ayatollah Khomeini.
- 2) General Madani, Commander of Naval Forces, undertook the disarmament of the Arabistan Arabs and ordered arrests, thus provoking incidents that left 500 dead, 320 wounded and led to the arrest of 700 militants.
- 3) Iran decided to put pressure on the surrounding countries to prevent them from sending aid to the inhabitants of Arabistan. Ayatollah Khomeini, President of the Revolutionary Courts, paid a visit to Bahrain, where he was to accuse Iraq, along with other Gulf countries, of sending weapons to Arabistan and to Mohammarah. Furthermore, he demanded that certain persons having "collaborated" with the Shah's regime and who were supposedly taking refuge in the Gulf area, be turned over to him. He also solicited that the opening of delegations of both the revolutionary authorities and the Iranian party "Fidaiyou Khalq" be authorized in the Gulf countries.

4) The month of April 1980 constituted an important turning point in the struggle of Arabistan. A fresh outbreak of acts of resistance was once again directed against a regime that had not freed itself of the Shah's politics.

Military operations were aimed at official buildings and oil complexes the chief labor force of which comes from Arabistan. By April the incidents were daily. Three revolutionary organizations — "Movement of the Mu-jahidin of the Arab Muslim People", "Popular Movement of Arabistan" and "The Political Organization of the Arab People of Arabistan" — led this resistance.

On April 30, 1980, a revolutionary group from the province of Arabistan occupied the Iranian Embassy in London and took its diplomatic corps as hostages. The principal demand of these revolutionaries was recognition by the government in Teheran of Arabistan's autonomy along with the liberation of several hundred prisoners. During his trip to the Gulf, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh spoke with the commando over the telephone and afterwards announced that those with whom he had spoken expressed themselves fluently in Persian and that he had told them of his government's wish to execute the prisoners from Arabistan at the same time as refusing their conditions. This operation was ended six days later when the British security forces attacked the Embassy, killing the revolutionaries and two hostages.

5) Ghotbzadeh declared that the Iranian government would take national differences into account, but that it would never tolerate demands for autonomy of any community whatsoever. He made still another somber proclamation by which the 1975 Algiers agreement was abrogated. (6)

THE OCCUPATION OF ARABISTAN

AND NAVIGATION IN THE SHATT-AL-ARAB

In spite of these revolts and unceasing protests, the occupation of Arabistan since 1925 was a step allowing Iran to take control of a part of the Shatt-al-Arab waters.

The Iranian authorities did everything possible to make the Shatt-al-Arab the common property of Iran and Iraq. It is for this reason that in November 1934, Iraq raised the question, asking that the conflict between the two countries be settled by means of negotiation. But Iran took advantage of the weakness of Iraq's political leadership following the coup of Bakr Sidqi, to reiterate its claims to Shatt-al-Arab, obliging Iraq, despite itself, to give its authorization for Iran to share navigation in the Shatt-al-Arab. This rendered the Iraq-Iran boundaries very delicate. (7)

Prior to the Second World War, more precisely in July 1937, a border agreement (8) was reached under the patronage of Great Britain that brought the boundary back to the Iranian bank of the Shatt-al-Arab, the waterway being wholly attributed to Iraq. (9)

The founding of the Iraqi Republic in 1958 caused deterioration in relations between the two countries. The all-powerful Shah officially denounced the treaty of 1937, reaffirming Iran's rights over half the Shatt-al-Arab's waters. Despite diverse tentative of mediation, frontier incidents multiplied. To weaken Baghdad, the Shah supported the Kurds under General Barazani, fighting against the central power in Iraq. (10) After the construction of refineries in Abadan, close to the east coast of the Shatt-al-Arab, Iran extended its claims to the islands in the Gulf, immediately after Great Britain's declaration regarding its retreat from the zone eastward of the Suez Canal. As already mentioned, "in 1971, the Shah occupied the three islands in the Strait of Hormuz, belonging to the Gulf Emirates, believing that he was to become the policeman of the Gulf". (11) "Baghdad was the only capital to protest against this annexation. This objection was not followed up." (12)

The tension in the relations between the two countries continued until a climax was reached towards the beginning of 1975, after which both sides were brought to the table of negotiation upon the initiative of late Algerian President Houari Boumediene, which led to the Declaration of Algiers on March 6, 1971 and the conclusion of a new treaty. Two important factors in the internal situation of Iraq encouraged its leaders to make certain concessions to Iran.

When the October War exploded in 1973, Iraqi forces were at the time deployed along the eastern front in full readiness for any Iranian aggression on national soil. In order to provide proper conditions for moving the Iraqi forces to the battle with the Zionist enemy, the Revolution Command Council issued a statement on October 7, 1973 in which it reaffirmed Iraq's readiness to settle the problems with Iran peacefully. So, Iraq sent its striking forces to Syria where they had the honor of taking an effective role in protecting Damascus from falling and checking the Zionist advance within Syrian land.

From the realistic point of view, issuing that statement implied Iraq's readiness to consider the claims of Iran in Shatt-al-Arab. (13)

Furthermore, it is incontestable that:

Our people offered all sacrifices needed in the battle which lasted twelve months, that is, from March 1974 to March 1975. The casualties of the Iraqi Army in that battle exceeded 16 thousand martyrs and wounded soldiers, while the total figure of the casualties of the people in general was more than 60 thousand killed and wounded.

Despite the valiant performance of our Army in fighting the puppets and those who have been backed up by the American-Zionist and Iranian forces, and despite the high morale of our men, it was impossible to ignore the material and objective requirements of the battle. Those requirements are sometimes of supreme significance in determining a lot of political and military outcomes.

The question reached a very crucial point when our supplies and essential ammunition began to run out and three heavy shells were all that remained for the Air Force. (14)

Nevertheless, the Algiers agreement was not to be respected by the Iranian side any more than the preceding ones.

NOTES

(1) al-Akkad, Salah, Op. Cit.. p. 234.

(2) (T. Integral text in Appendix VII (p. 207).

(3) According to certain historians, "As-Sa'adah" may get its name from the "Coalition of Sa'adah" (Coalition of Happiness) created by Sheikh Khazaal with neighboring tribes in order to resist Reza Khan.

(4) Afterwards, it was Dr. Hanzal Khazaal who came to visit him to reiterate these demands. Khomeiny refused to hold the interview in Arabic. Abul-Hassan Bani Sadr acted as interpreter.

(5) The texts of the new constitution of the Islamic Republic were published in the Kayhan Journal, April 28, 1979.

(6) Al-Mostaqbal Review, n" 123, June 30, 1980.

(7) Berreby, Jean-Jacques, Op. cit., p. 109.

(8) Cf. Integral text of this agreement in Appendix VIII (p. 211).

(9) Le Monde, September 29, 1980.

(10) Cf. Le Point, n"419, September 29, 1980.

(11) Idem.

(12) Le Monde, September 29, 1980.

(13) Taken from the Iraqi President's speech on September 17. 19KO. (Cf. Integral text in Appendix XI, p. 223).

(14) Idem.

CHAPTER 6

THE COURSE OF THE WAR:

THE FIRST PHASE

It is incontestable that relations between Iraq and Iran had deteriorated since the return of Khomeini to Teheran and even before, as a study of each country's declarations will confirm. A reliable review such as "Geopolitique du Petrole" had pointed out the possibility of war between Iraq and Iran and continued its analysis in exposing that which it called "the military imbalance" between the two countries.

From the standpoint of land forces, the disproportion between the army bequeathed to the Republic of Khomeini by the Shah and that of the Iraqi regime is no less considerable: approximately 400,000 soldiers serving Iran and a little over 200,000 for Iraq... Iran theoretically disposes of a more modern and complete armament than does Iraq, but the corps of Iranian officers is still under the effects of the purges, trials and executions of its most prestigious generals... (1)

For the Arab countries it was clear that since the return of Khomeini to Iran, neighborly relations with that state had started to deteriorate, which would lead the two countries towards war in early September 1980. It could have been expected that the Iranian Revolution, which had upheld that of the Palestinians, would proclaim that the Shah had illegally conquered Arab lands in the Gulf. It ought to have decided to restore these lands to their Arab and Muslim inhabitants, since it had announced its revolutionary nature to all Muslims. It was also expected that Iran would apply the agreements signed with Iraq by which it promised to maintain courteous relations and not to threaten the security of neighboring countries. These hopes proved to be in vain.

In fact, as previously seen, the new Iranian leaders have taken it upon themselves to undermine the security of the other Arab and Muslim countries. They have declared that the territories forcibly annexed by the Shah would remain Iranian. They even went as far as to claim Iraq and the other Gulf countries as Persian territories. Furthermore, they have adhered to a policy of interference in the internal affairs of the Arab regimes, especially that of Iraq. The authorities in Iran have maneuvered in various ways to create difficulties for the Iraqi government and have unceasingly invoked its downfall.

*** Military provocations**

The hostility expressed by the Iranian demonstrators and leaders against Iraq was accompanied by aggressions and military provocations that have led to a state of war. Before this degradation of the situation, the Iranian forces had committed 244 border violations or acts of aggression against Iraq by air, sea and land in the period from February 23, 1979 to July 26, 1980. (2) Among these acts should be included bombings of Iraqi border posts, the capture of soldiers belonging to border units, the interception of civil planes and aggressions against Iraqi and foreign ships in the Shatt-al-Arab. The Iraqi forces answered these aggressions in trying to limit them. During

this period, Iraq sent 240 official notes to the Embassy of the Iranian Republic in Baghdad (3), giving an account of the aggressions, their date, form and consequences. Moreover, Iraq sent official notes to most of the regional and international organizations (4) : the League of Arab States, the U.N., the Nonaligned Movement, the Organization for African Unity, the Conference of Islamic Nations, etc. Even though these organizations were informed of the events having taken place on the Iraq-Iran border, Teheran did not take the notes of protest into consideration, thus violating international laws and rules as well as the conventions concluded between the two countries.

*** Military concentrations and the triggering of clashes**

At the end of July 1980, movements and concentrations of Iranian troops were observed near the border with Iraq. The Iranian artillery started violently bombarding the Iraqi border posts. It is thus that July 28th the post of al-Chib was attacked and seriously damaged. These skirmishes soon took the appearance of a real war. Teheran did not hesitate to boast: "When the Iranian army marches toward Baghdad, no one will be able to hold it back. By means of a mere communiqué we shall be able to decree the fall of the Iraqi regime."

By August, the amplitude and violence of the clashes became unbearable for the Iraqi authorities. On the 6th, for example, Iran tried to compromise the Soviet Union by demanding that it halt its deliveries of weapons to Iraq. August 27th, Teheran announced that combats had grown in importance in the Qasr-e-Shirin sector and had extended to all frontier posts in the region. The Iranian army used "ground-to-ground" missiles for the first time. (5)

THE WAR

On the morning of Thursday, September 4th, violent air and naval fighting burst out after the shelling of several Iraqi villages, namely, Khanaqin, Muzayriah, Zurbatiyah, Qata'Mandali and Mustapha Lwand, and the oil installations of Naft Khaneh by Iranian forces. According to the military communiqués of both countries, these battles caused a great number of victims, dead or wounded. Two of Iran's Phantom bombers were shot down. Equally violent combats continued on September 5th and 6th. These brought about the destruction of the oil plants in that region as well as of numerous military posts. The Iraqi forces went into action by shelling the villages of Qasr-e-Shirin and Mehran.

*** The liberation of two regions: Zein al-Qaws and Saif Saad**

The Iraqi government was surprised by the intensity of these combats and attempted to put an end to the hostilities by diplomatic means. It sent an official note to the Iranian Embassy in Baghdad in which they were informed of the damage caused in Iraq by Iranian artillery. The Iranian forces nevertheless pursued their operations; thereafter, the Iranian aviation attacked the posts of al-Hussein, Kouteiba, Houk and Ghazali, as well as the village of Khanaqin.

September 9th, the Iraqi army was moved to the border and following a violent struggle, forced the Iranians to retreat from the region of Zein al-Qaws. Afterwards, Iraq demanded by way of an official note that Iran return the Iraqi territories it was occupying in violation of the agreements concluded between the two countries, in particular, the 1975 Algiers treaty. That note was left unanswered. On the contrary, Iran multiplied its acts of aggression. Fighting recommenced at Diyalah and Wasit. On September 10th, the Iraqi forces liberated the region of Saif Saad, subsequent to clashes during which the head of Iranian military operations, General Chabni, was killed (the helicopter in which he was accompanied by numerous Iranian officers was shot down). In addition, two Phantoms and several tanks were destroyed. Naval combats resulted in the sinking of two Iranian patrol boats. By September 16th, the Iraqi forces had already liberated 125 sq. miles of the territory attributed to Iraq by the Algiers agreement.

The pursuit of hostilities from then on remained uninterrupted. Iran decided to close its airspace. Bombings in the region of Shatt-al-Arab were intensified and several ships were hit. All around the world, attention was drawn to this region, especially after Teheran's threat to prohibit navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and the Shatt-al-Arab zone.

ABROGATION OF THE 1975 ALGIERS AGREEMENT

In the evening of September 17, 1980, the members of the Iraqi National Assembly were convoked to an emergency session. Upon entering the auditorium, the representatives looked solemn; they knew that crucial decisions were to be taken. Some were seeking information about the outcome of the fighting. When the deputies had taken their seats, President Saddam Hussein took his place on the platform and pronounced a speech that was to become historic: (6)

Following the signing of the Accord, negotiation and contacts were held in view of enforcing its clauses, especially those concerning demarcation, fixing border pillars and other technicalities. Three basic protocols were signed on the basis of the Accord, namely, the protocol of delineation of river borders, the protocol of re-demarcation of land borders and the protocol on border security.

The Iranian side benefited at an early stage from the protocol of delineation of the river borders in Shatt-al-Arab, whereas additional time was normally required for the implementation of the protocol of land borders. The measures of returning these territories to Iraq were delayed owing to the conditions of the former Iranian regime in

1979 and 1980. The new regime assumed office while our territories were still under the other party's control. We then understood the new regime's need for some time to honor its commitments under the Accord. But since the first day of the assumption of power by this ruling group in Iran, we noticed an aggressive stand on their part, and a breach of neighborly relations... They, therefore, fully bear the legal and de facto responsibility of rendering this accord null and void...

Since the rulers of Iran have violated this accord from the very beginning of their assumption of power through unmasked and deliberate interference in the domestic affairs of Iraq and... by refusing to return the Iraqi territories that we were obliged to liberate by force, for these reasons, I hereby announce before you that the Accord of March 6, 1975 is terminated on our part too. (The Revolution Command Council issued a decree to this effect.)

Therefore, the legal relationship in Shatt-al-Arab must return to what it was prior to March 6, 1975. This river must recover its Iraqi Arab identity as it had been throughout history in name and in reality, with all the disposal rights emanating from full sovereignty over the river.

During the night, Mr. Tareq Hamad-al-Abdallah, Secretary General of the R.C.C., was seen on television, informing the Iraqi people of the decisions taken by that Council and unanimously adopted by the National Assembly. The Algiers agreements and their annexes were thus abrogated.

*** The provisions of the Algiers agreement can be summarized in three points (7):**

1) The two contracting parties recognize that the Shatt-al-Arab is principally an international route of navigation. Consequently, they engage themselves to abstain from any exploitation likely to disturb navigation within the Shatt-al-Arab, in the territorial waters of these two countries and in all parts of the navigable channels in territorial water leading to the mouth of the Shatt-al-Arab.

2) Both parties will once again be able to restore security and mutual confidence along their common boundaries. The two parties promise to bring into effect a very strict and efficient control on the borders they share so as to put an end to all subversive infiltrations, whatever their origin.

3) Measures will be taken to carry out the demarcation of land boundaries between the two countries.

It should be noted that no mention is made in these dispositions of Iraq's renunciation to its demand of evacuation of the three islands in the Strait of Hormuz that were occupied in 1971 by the Imperial navy.

Significance of the abrogation of the Algiers agreement The decision to annul the agreement took on a further dimension when the Iraqi authorities put the following measures into effect as a result:

- 1 - All vessels wishing to use the Shatt-al-Arab were obliged to fly the Iraqi flag and to conform to the orders of the Iraqi authorities. For example, "for the first time since 1975 a Japanese ship has undertaken the crossing of the Shatt-al-Arab with an Iraqi pilot and with the Iraqi flag raised high on the mast". (8)
- 2 - The Shatt-al-Arab was reinstated as an Iraqi national waterway under the full sovereignty of Baghdad, as it already had been in the past (see above).
- 3 - The decision of Iraq gave it total sovereignty over its sea and air, in addition to the right to define the rules of navigation in the Shatt-al-Arab.
- 4 - The absolute sovereignty of Iraq over the Shatt-al-Arab conferred it the legal right to determine all penal and civil questions concerning this region. The duty to oversee all expenses and repairs due to navigation was additionally attributed to Iraq.
- 5 - The port authorities both inside and outside Iraq were informed that they were to refer to the orders of the Port of Basra and to the navigation rules effective in the Shatt-al-Arab before the agreement of 1975. These rules were related to the control of river traffic, to navigation licenses and to port duties.
- 6 - The owners of ships using the Shatt-al-Arab were warned of the necessity to abide by these instructions and to remain in contact exclusively with the Iraqi patrollers in charge of meeting them at the entrance to or exit from the Shatt-al-Arab.

In fact, Iraq and Iran had both recognized on several

occasions that the Algiers agreement was not been respected. "The Iranian Head of State, Abul Hassan Bani Sadr has admitted that Iran had not applied the Algiers agreement, foreseeing the restitution to Iraq of certain territories administered by Iran, but he assigned the responsibility for this shortcoming to the Shah's regime." (9)

The Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Saadoun Hammadi has in turn indicated that "the Algiers agreement includes a passage stipulating that if any article is violated, the whole protocol becomes null and void... At least two articles have failed to be respected: that involving the restoration of the Zein al-Qaws and Saif Saad sectors, and another, the question of security... Teheran allowed one of General Barazani's sons to enter Iran so as to use him for reviving agitation in Iraqi Kurdistan". (10)

LIBERATION OF THE SHATT-AL-ARAB

On September 17th, Iranian bombings of the Shatt-al-Arab were intensified. Fierce combats took place in the port of Mohammarah and at the Abadan airport. The headquarters of the Iranian armed forces announced in a communiqué that the area of fighting henceforth included the entire region of the Shatt-al-Arab. The same message indicated that the Iraqi side of the Shatt was being shelled by Iranian missiles and heavy artillery. The Iranian army made it known that an Iraqi border post and ammunition depot had been obliterated. After that, five Iranian warships were destroyed at the Khosrowabad base, to the south of the port of Abadan, as well as this base's installations.

Baghdad announced that the Iraqi forces had attacked Iranian warships which had intercepted and machine-gunned the English ship "Orient Star" on its way to the port of Basra. Navigation was practically cut off in the Shatt-al-Arab. Moreover, Iranian patrollers intercepted a Kuwaiti vessel which was directed toward the port of Basra bearing the Iraqi flag. Another ship, the "Lucile", registered in Singapore, was caught under Iranian fire in the port of Mohammarah; it, too, was flying the Iraqi flag.

By September 21st, the Iraqi forces had finished liberating all territories attributed to Iraq according to the Algiers agreement. Baghdad then proposed an opening of negotiations with Teheran in order to find a just solution to the conflict, that is, one that would take the interests of both countries into account while respecting the agreements concluded between them. Iran rejected this offer and intensified its military operations in the afternoon of September 21st. The Iranian forces set about the systematic bombing of Iraqi cities, factories, schools and hospitals, and shelled the boats anchored in the Shatt-al-Arab. In the evening of that day, 125,000 Iranian reservists came to reinforce the "Guardians of the Revolution" and the Iranian army, in conformity with a decision of the authorities of Teheran obliging these reservists to get to the eastern front by October 3rd.

Until that date, the news agencies had met with difficulties in trying to obtain information from the Iranian side due to the breakdown in communications between Teheran and the outside world. The Iranian radio picked up in Paris and in London constituted the major source for Iranian news and communiqués.

According to "Le Monde", the Iranians bombarded military objectives in Iraq, causing damage to six airports; 47 persons were killed and 100 wounded. Iran also gave orders for merchant vessels found in the Shatt-al-Arab to leave the area as fast as possible.

THE IRAQI COUNTER-ATTACK ON SEPTEMBER 22nd

After weighing the gradual transformation of the clashes into an open war, and in retaliation to Teheran's attempts to paralyze navigation in the Shatt-al-Arab, the Iraqi Revolution Command Council was resolved to strike hard once and for all.

On September 22nd, the Iraqi air forces raided ten army and air force bases located inside Iranian territory. These raids caused heavy damage and even destroyed such airports as

Kermanshah, Sanandaj and Al-Ahwaz, in addition to the army bases of Hamadan, Teheran, Isfahan, Dezful, Shiraz and Tabriz. In return, Iranian planes carried out raids on Basra and Wasit in Iraq. Teheran warned the Gulf countries against any attempt to attack Iran by air, sea or land from their territories.

* Intensification of military operations and the Strait of Hormuz threatened with closure

On September 23rd, the military situation was aggravated when Iranian aviation bombed six Iraqi airports and launched raids against Baghdad, Nineveh and Basra, causing the destruction of this city's petro-chemical plant. It was then that the Iraqi forces penetrated by about fifteen kilometers into Iranian territory and laid siege to the villages of Sumar, Qasr-e-Shirin, Zahab and Charmel. Furthermore, they tightened their control of the city of Mohammarah, and destroyed part of the Abadan refineries.

It was only at this time, when fighting gained in intensity and spread to the region of the Shatt-al-Arab, that the conflict took on an international dimension. Highly industrialized states started to fear that their economy, progress and prosperity were in danger, especially after the repeated threats of Iran to close the Strait of Hormuz. Taking note of these threats, President Saddam Hussein declared that

...the Iranian attempts to take control of the navigation in the Strait of Hormuz represent a step towards an all-out war and create the circumstances for foreign intervention in the affairs of the region. Iraq will not remain passive in front of this new situation, but will take all necessary measures to bring the Iranians to respect the rights of others as well as international law. (11)

We shall not linger any longer on the military details and the destruction caused by this war. The military messages emanating from both countries are extremely contradictory; it is therefore difficult to have an exact idea of the extent of the damages and to evaluate the losses in lives and equipment.

FIRST REACTIONS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

a) Waldheim's appeal

International circles attentively observed the evolution of the war and its effects upon the world situation. On September 22nd, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Kurt Waldheim, sent out an appeal to both countries, inviting them to cease fire and to open negotiations. This request was transmitted to the representatives of the two countries in the United Nations. (12) Iraq responded favorably to this invitation, but put three conditions upon the stopping of combats:

- 1 - Respect of Iraqi sovereignty over the frontier zone separating it from Iran.
- 2 - Respect and recognition of Iraqi sovereignty over the Shatt-al-Arab.
- 3 - Iran's retreat from the islands of Abu Musa and the two Tumbs.

With regard to the Iranians, they altogether failed to reply to Kurt Waldheim.

b) An appeal from Europe

Due to the efforts of Jean Francois-Poncet, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, the European Community indicated its interest in these "naval and air battles over such a powder keg". In view of Iranian threats relative to the Strait of Hormuz, the Committee of Nine published the following declaration on September 23rd:

1. The nine states of the European Community express their strong concern over the military confrontation between Iraq and Iran.
2. Noting the bilateral nature of the current conflict, they underline the need to avoid anything that could extend it. In this regard, they rely upon the continuing restraint of all other states, notably that of the Great Powers.
3. They approve of the appeal communicated by the Secretary General of the Conference of Islamic Nations in favor of an immediate cease-fire and, referring themselves to the discussions already underway thanks to Mr. K. Waldheim, Secretary General of the U.N.O., they declare their readiness to support any international initiative apt to favor a political solution to the argument.
4. They recall the extreme importance that the freedom of navigation in the Gulf represents for the entire international community, and the necessity of not infringing upon it.
5. They decide to continue following the developments of the situation with the utmost attention and remain prepared to contribute their help in seeking a solution. (13)

c) Appeal from the Security Council

The Security Council met in the late afternoon of September 23rd, and after several hours of discussion, its President, the Tunisian Tayeb Slim, made its appeal to the belligerents known:

The members of the Council are extremely preoccupied by the idea that this conflict is destined to grow more and more serious and that it may represent a severe threat to international peace and security. They heartily welcome and fully support the appeal that the Secretary General addressed to both parties September 22, 1980, along with his offer of mediation to resolve the present conflict. The Council members have asked me to represent them in appealing to the governments of Iraq and Iran to take the first step in view of a solution to their dispute by abstaining from all armed activity and all acts likely to aggravate the dangerous situation which presently exists, and by settling their argument by pacific means.

The Iraqi delegate, Salah Omar al-Ali, participated in the meeting, but his Iranian colleague was absent. (14)

d) The Soviet-American talks (15)

The United States Secretary of State, Edmund Muskie, met his Soviet colleague, Andrei Gromyko, at the headquarters of the Soviet delegation to the United Nations in New York. Their conversations chiefly dealt with the Iraq-Iran conflict. This was the first demonstration of the misgivings of the two powers.

Observers noted that the position of both Moscow and Washington was characterized by hesitant, prudent neutrality. This impression was confirmed afterwards. The Soviet-American talks did not lead to any concrete proposition which would have permitted the Security Council to find a solution to the conflict.

e) France's worry

France, which offered the most active diplomacy among the Western countries, once again expressed its apprehension in view of the increasing deterioration of the situation in the Gulf. The French Cabinet published a communiqué on September 24th, in which it expressed its disapproval of any military action that would result in the halting of navigation in the Gulf:

The French government expresses its serious preoccupation about the consequences of the military confrontation opposing Iraq and Iran. France observes that the dispute having brought about these clashes is strictly bilateral and considers that it must become the object of a political settlement.

It relies on the other states, notably the Great Powers, to demonstrate the greatest reserve so as to favor this objective. France emphasizes the importance of maintaining the freedom of navigation in the Gulf for the entire world community as well as the necessity of not endangering it. (16)

*** Contacts between Moscow and Paris**

While the French Cabinet was meeting to discuss the consequences of the war, a special envoy of the Iraqi President, Mr. Tareq Aziz, arrived in Paris with a note for President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing informing him of the latest developments. This visit to Paris of the Iraqi Deputy Premier was the follow-up to a three-day official stay in the Soviet Union, which was in the scope of normal Soviet-Iraqi consultations.

Following his interview with the French President, Mr. Tareq Aziz gave a press conference at the Iraqi Cultural Center in Paris on the afternoon of September 23, 1980, addressing himself to over 150 newspapermen from the French and foreign media. To a question about the possibility for negotiation, the Iraqi Deputy Premier was to reply:

We have no other aim or objective than to see our rights put into effect. If the opposing party wishes to speak with us, we are disposed to listen and to discuss with them. We do not reject any initiative that would favor a settlement of the conflict on a peaceful basis. This initiative could come from any country in the world, except Israel, which we do not recognize, or the United States.

Iraq does not wish to prolong the conflict. If the Iranian leaders announce today that they accept the moderate conditions of Iraq, the Iraqi authorities will immediately react in a positive manner...

He went on to explain these conditions:

- 1) Recognition by Iran of the sovereignty and rights of Iraq over its national territory.
- 2) Establishment of neighborly relations with Iraq and the Arab nation.
- 3) End to all interference in the internal affairs of bordering countries.
- 4) Stopping of every kind of act of aggression.

Mr. Tareq Aziz concluded by explaining that Iraq did not wish to prolong the struggle and then asserted:

If we say that, it is not because we are weak but because our position is strong. (17)

IRAQ REPLIES AFFIRMATIVELY

TO THE APPEAL OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On September 24th, Dr. Saadoun Hammadi, Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, dispatched a letter to the President of the Security Council and to the Secretary General of the United Nations, in which he transmitted the Iraqi answer to the request sent the day before by the Security Council. This letter asserted:

Iraq considers that since the Algiers agreement dated March 6, 1975 has not been respected by the Iranian side, it is abrogated in virtue of the provisions of Article 4 of this agreement. Iraq has taken this decision after having exhausted all peaceful means over the past three years in trying to urge Iran to abide by this protocol. Iraq has firmly declared that it had no designs upon Iranian territory and that it had not wished to declare war with Iran or to enlarge the combat zone. But Iran has on its own initiative undertaken to extend the conflict, bringing Iraq to retaliate by attacking objectives located inside Iranian territory. Our goal is to preserve the interests of Iraq, of the Gulf region and of the international community. (18)

Iran admits the superiority of Iraq

On September 24th, Iranian President Bani Sadr recognized Iraqi military superiority. In the meantime, Khomeini entreated the Iraqi army and people to "rise up against the Ba'athist regime". (19)

In the field of operations, the war was then becoming characterized by the intensive use of aviation against the petroleum complexes. Naval combats were intensified in the Shatt-al-Arab. Iraqi military communiqués reported raids by Iranian aviation against the refinery in Naft Chaabiyah and the oil terminal of Basra. These attacks also hit economic centers and the civilian population.

Regarding the Iraqi air forces, they shelled Iranian positions, for instance, the base at Tabriz as well as the airport and the Ahwaz installations. Iran announced an Iraqi raid on the islet of Kharg where the main outlet of Iranian oil is to be found; two oil reservoirs caught fire. Moreover, Iraqi forces took over full control of the region of Qasr-e-Shirin and Mehran.

On September 25th, the Iraqi army arrived at the entrance to the city of Mohammarah. Before furthering its advance, the first accomplishment was to destroy the wall of sand erected by the Iranians all along the Shatt-al-Arab facing Basra. In little time, Mohammarah was to find itself under the threat of the Iraqis, who meanwhile were continuing to progress within Iranian territory. The Iraqi flag was raised over the prefecture of Mehran. The Iraqi army also invested the oil plant of Chah Abad. Iran announced that its aviation had carried out three raids over the city of Kirkuk, damaging its airport and petroleum installations. Other Iranian attacks struck the towns of Arbil, Mosul, al-Kut and Basra.

IRAQ RECOVERS ALL CONFISCATED TERRITORIES

The Iraqi Defense Minister, General Adnan Khairallah, announced during a press conference held on September 24th that Iraqi forces had regained all stolen Iraqi territories. He declared:

The penetration of our forces inside Iranian territory, beyond the international borderline, is a reaction against Iran's closing of the Shatt-al-Arab and its threat to close the Strait of Hormuz, which is a strategic passageway not only for Iraq but for all countries in the region. This threat involves the interests of the Third World countries, all the more so since we know that Europe and Japan along with a great number of countries worldwide fulfill their energy needs in this region.

The Iraqi Defense Minister was to add:

The war can be stopped if Iran recognizes our rights, otherwise it will continue and we will be forced to strike vital points in Iran till the day they recognize our legitimate rights... We have demanded total sovereignty over the Shatt-al-Arab, but we have no territorial ambitions. In particular, we do not have the intention of seizing the oil reserves of Arabistan because we have enough oil.

General Khairallah concluded his press conference in the following terms:

We befriend and respect the peoples and armed forces of Iran. The latter have been forced into fighting to satisfy the designs of the Iranian leaders. (20)

Notes

(1) (Geopolitique du Pétrole, December 31, 1979.

(2) Official Memorandum about the Iraq-Iran border conflict, Foreign Affairs Ministry of Iraq. November 1980.

(3) Cf. Appendix IX (p. 217).

(4) Cf. Appendix X (p. 219).

(5) Le Monde, August 29 and September 29, 1980.

(6) Cf. Integral text of the speech in Appendix XI (p. 223).

(7) Cf. Appendices XII (p. 227) and XIII (p. 241) for integral text of the agreement and annexes.

(8) Le Monde, September 21-22, 1980.

(9) Le Monde, September 19, 1980.

(10) Le Monde, October 7, 1980.

(11) Le Monde, September 23, 1980.

(12) An-Nahar, September 23, 1980.

(13) Le Monde, September 25, 1980.

(14) Le Monde, September 24, 1980.

(15) Cf. Herald Tribune and Le Matin, September 26, 1980.

(16) Le Monde, September 25, 1980.

(17) Notes taken by a delegate of E.M.A.

(18) An-Nahar, September 26, 1980.

(19) An-Nahar, September 25, 1980.

(20) Le Monde, September 26, 1980

CHAPTER 7

THE COURSE OF THE WAR THE SECOND PHASE

NEW INITIATIVES FOR PEACE

Three international initiatives have thus far become the basis for diplomatic efforts aimed at finding a solution to the Iraq-Iran conflict. The first is that of the Security Council which adopted a resolution demanding a ceasefire by both of the belligerents. The second emanates from the Islamic countries that decided to send a delegation assigned to a "goodwill mission" between the two capitals, Baghdad and Teheran. This delegation was headed by Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq, in his capacity as President of the Conference of Islamic Nations (C.I.N.), who was accompanied by Mr. Habib Chatti, Secretary General of the C.I.N. The third initiative was that of Fidel Castro, President of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, whose Minister of Foreign Affairs, Isidore Malmairca, was in charge of transmitting messages to the Presidents of Iraq and Iran and was to discuss with them the means of putting an end to the hostilities.

*** Iraq's Acceptance vs. Iran's Refusal**

Dr. Saadoun Hammadi, Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared that his country would favorably accept any proposal for mediation, along with any international initiative "regarding the problems that are at the origin of the present conflict, whether it be at the level of international or regional organizations, so as to identify our rights and guarantee them as well as our national interests". Dr. Hammadi was to add:

Iraq, aware of its responsibilities and basing itself on the principle of nonalignment and on the United Nations Charter, has defined its policy after having proved that it has the possibility to defend its sovereignty and its rights by military means, once political means have been exhausted. In accordance with its principles, Iraq announces that it wishes to preserve world peace. By the same token, it appreciates the concern of many countries anxious to maintain security in this region. Iraq understands and shares the preoccupation of these countries and would like it to be known that Iraq realizes its responsibilities toward the vital economic interests of the world, especially with regard to petroleum.

The Iranian Prime Minister, Mohammed Ali Rajai, on the contrary, has clearly rejected these diverse initiatives. In an interview given prior to the arrival of the he-Pakistani President and Mr. Habib Chatti, Mr. Rajai made the announcement that "My country is ready to welcome all personalities, but we shall never accept to receive a mission of good will. Furthermore, we shall never declare that Iran is prepared to negotiate".

*** Iraq announces the stopping of fighting before the decision of the Security Council**

While tentative at mediation in the Iraq-Iran conflict were at a standstill and the United Nations was inviting the belligerents "to abstain from any new recourse to force", Iraq proclaimed that it was ready to accept an immediate cease-fire. On the morning of September 28th (9: 55, local time), President Saddam Hussein asserted in a radio-broadcast speech: (1)

We proclaim to the entire world that Iraq is prepared to stop fighting if the other side accepts this earnest plea.

The President then added that:

Iraq is disposed to negotiating directly with the Iranian party, or through a third party or any international organization, in order to reach a just and honorable solution guaranteeing our rights. Our forces are now holding the positions assigned them at Qasr-e-Shirin, Mehran, Sarbil Zahab, Ahwaz and Mohammarah, the pearl of the Shatt-al-Arab,

the city that got rid of its mourning clothes today and put on an Arab dress, that of victory.

We are not taking advantage of our military victory to formulate demands to which we have no right... We are asking the Iranian government to legally and virtually recognize our legitimate rights, namely, Iraqi sovereignty over its national territory as well as its river and sea waters. We also want Iran to desist from its illegal occupation of the three islands, Greater and Lesser Tumbs and Abu Musa, and to cease its interference in our internal affairs and in those of the other countries of the region. This battle is not ours alone, but rather that of all Arabs so as to maintain the Arab character of the Gulf, to push aside the danger of Persian expansionism and to avoid the intervention of external powers.

On the evening of the same day (6: 30 p.m. local time), the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution presented by Mexico and Norway, which states:

- 1 - the Council demands that Iraq and Iran immediately abstain from any further recourse to force and that they settle their argument by pacific means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law;
- 2 - It invites them to accept all appropriate offers of mediation and conciliation;
- 3 - It requests that other states demonstrate great moderation and that they abstain from any act likely to cause an escalation or extension of the conflict;
- 4 - It expresses its support of the Secretary General's efforts and his offer of good offices;
- 5 - It recommends that the Secretary General prepare a report for the Security Council within forty-eight hours. (2)

*** The efforts of the Islamic Conference**

At the same time as the Iraqi Head of State was making his speech, the Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq and Mr. Habib Chatti were stopping over in Amman on their way to Baghdad. The Pakistani President and Mr. Chatti had already met President Abul Hassan Bani Sadr in Teheran, but Khomeini had refused to receive them. President Zia-ul-Haq commented the earlier interview in these terms: "Iran is still in a phase where mediations lead to nothing." One of the collaborators of Bani Sadr declared that "the Pakistani President did not obtain any result... We shall continue fighting until the last Iraqi soldier has evacuated Iranian territory". (3)

The Iraqi Head of State, Saddam Hussein, had reacted positively during a telephone conversation to the proposition of Mr. Zia-ul-Haq to come to Iraq to carry out a mission of mediation. President Hussein told him the following:

Even though it finds itself in a position of force, Iraq favorably accepts the Islamic initiative and encourages any initiative of peace undertaken by the international organizations in which Iraq is a member or by regional organizations and friendly countries. (4)

While in Baghdad, the Pakistani President had a series of official talks with the Iraqi Head of State in the presence of Emir Hassan ben Talal, Prince and heir of the Jordanian Kingdom. During these interviews, Iraq confirmed its readiness to both facilitate and contribute to the success of the mission of the C.I.N. president.

President Zia-ul-Haq then went to New York after passing through Paris, where he spoke with Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. When he was leaving the Elysee, he affirmed that "the talks that he had had in Baghdad had given him real hope of finding a solution to the Iraq-Iran conflict". (5)

*** The initiative of the nonaligned countries**

The initiative of the nonaligned countries was no more successful than the two preceding ones. Following the visit of the Cuban Foreign Affairs Minister to Iraq on September 26th, an official spokesman announced: "Iraq has accepted Cuba's 'goodwill mission', the aim of which is to put an end to this conflict." (6) "On the other hand, by way of Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Rajai, Iran renewed its refusal to accept any mediation as long as the Iraqi forces were in Iran." (7) The visit of the Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs to Iran thus ended in failure. Mr. Rajai explained: "Castro has misunderstood the revolution of our people if he is asking us to sit at the negotiation table with Iraq..." (8)

*** The declarations of the Iranian ambassador in Moscow**

The Iranian rejection of any attempt to settle the conflict was clearly evidenced by the declaration of Mohammed Mokri, Ambassador of Iran in Moscow who, during a press conference held September 29th (9), indicated that Iran did not assign any great importance to the 1921 treaty with Russia, and specifically articles 5 and 6 which were denounced by the Islamic Republic (10). Mr. Mokri added that the opening of negotiations with Iraq depended on several conditions:

- The downfall of the regime of Saddam Hussein and his replacement by the true representatives of the Iraqi people.

- Iranian occupation of the Iraqi city of Basra as a guarantee for payment of war indemnities. After paying these reparations, the population of this city would be asked to pronounce itself by vote upon its connection to Iraq or to Iran.

- The organization of a vote in Iraqi Kurdistan for autonomy or for its attachment to Iran.

*** Opposite reactions of Iran and Iraq to the Security Council resolution**

After having approved of the opening of negotiations, the President of the Iraqi Republic dispatched a letter that was received by the Secretary General of the United Nations on September 29th. (11) In it, he stated that Iraq accepted the terms of the resolution adopted by the Security Council and promised to cease fire on condition that this would be reciprocated. The next step, according to the Iraqi Head of State, should have been the opening of "negotiations, directly, by mediation, or by the representatives of an international organization or any body that we respect and in which we trust, in view of finding an equitable and honorable solution which would guarantee our rights and our sovereignty".

On the other hand, the Islamic Republic refuses any direct or indirect dialogue with Iraq, as long as the Iraqi troops have not withdrawn... The propositions included in your letter and in the resolution of the Security Council cannot be taken into consideration by our government. (12)

This excerpt from the reply to Mr. Waldheim's letter signed by Bani Sadr and dated September 22nd as well as to the resolution adopted on September 28th by the Security Council accurately reflects Iran's categorical rejection of all demands to end the fighting.

RECRUDESCENCE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

While these diplomatic efforts were being made, air raids were striking the cities plus the oil and industrial complexes of both countries, notably Teheran, Mosul and Kirkuk. It was during this period that the exports in Iraqi oil feeding the pipelines that cross Turkey and Syria were interrupted. The intensification of military operations culminated on September 27th, a key date in the course of the war. Combats were then flaring on the outskirts of Al-Ahwaz, the capital of Arabistan, and in some parts of Mohammarah. The same day, the Iraqi forces published communiqué n° 41, addressed to the army and people of Iraq as well as to all Arab countries, the terms of which were as follows:

Your glorious army has arrived in Al-Ahwaz!!! Right now it is with your Arab brothers who belong to the tribes of the Bani Ka'ab, Bani Tarf, Kinana, Bani Lam, Tamim, Malek, Sawari, Salamat al-Muhaysin, Sakhr and Mawsawiyah... All of them are under the

protection of your army which has glorified the soil of Arabistan and has in turn been glorified by this soil, its history and its martyrs. Thus, our glorious army has attained its strategic ends as defined by its leaders. Its duty is now to consolidate this victory. (13)

Simultaneously, the Iranian radio was broadcasting a speech by Khomeini instructing the religious leaders to prepare the people for war. The Imam announced that his country would carry on the struggle to its last soldier. Observers noted that this was the first call to arms from the "Guide of the Revolution". They also noticed that this appeal represented an implicit confession of the Iraqi forces' progression inside Iranian territory.

*** Bombing of the Iraqi nuclear research center**

On September 30th, thick black smoke was seen rising from Baghdad: Iranian aviation had just hit the thermal power plant in Dawra. During that raid, which caused the death of fifteen persons, oil supplies belonging to the plant were set on fire. In the meantime, Phantom F4's were attacking concrete buildings in the region of Ashtar to the east of Baghdad, at the entrance of which a sign announced "Electronic Industries". What was really involved was the Franco-Iraqi nuclear research center housing the Isis and Osirak reactors (which the Iraqis call Tamuz 1 and 2).

The identity of the attacking planes has not been formally established. Radio-Teheran denied Iran's responsibility for this raid. According to diverse sources (14), it could have been Israeli fighters that had organized the attack. The statements of certain top Israeli leaders tend to corroborate this thesis. Forty-eight hours before the attack, General Yehoshua Seguy, Chief of the Israeli military intelligence services, declared his surprise that "Iran had not yet attempted to bombard the Iraqi nuclear reactor in construction near Baghdad". The Israeli newspapers dwelt on the details of this raid before a sudden blackout on the affair. (15)

In an interview by the Kuwaiti newspaper "Al-Anba' ", President Saddam Hussein evoked this affair for the first time:

We have in our possession several elements which cannot be divulged at the present time. However, I am able to affirm that Iran bombed these nuclear plants with the assistance of a foreign power which owns the same type of plane (Phantom), that is to say, Israel. We struck down some of the planes that bombed the plants, and the Iranian pilots thus captured confessed that Iran participated in this operation. On the other hand, we were unable to find the rest of the aviators whose planes were shot down because the safety button that was supposed to eject the pilot in case of emergency was removed, inevitably bringing about their death. The reason for doing this was to dissimulate the identity of these pilots. (16)

For years the French-Iraqi nuclear cooperation has provoked strong reactions in Israel, despite repeated claims from Baghdad and Paris that the Isis and Osirak reactors were

destined solely for civil use. Unlike Israel, Iraq adheres to the nuclear nonproliferation treaty and has consented that its nuclear complexes be inspected by the International Atomic Energy Commission (I.A.B.C.). Baghdad therefore has no intention of using the 93 % enriched uranium fuel delivered by Paris for military objectives. On September 24th, Jean Francois-Poncet, French Foreign Affairs Minister, on a visit to New York, emphasized the purely peaceful nature of Franco-Iraqi nuclear cooperation "despite all the news published here and there". Finally, the French Government explained that:

The delivery to Iraq of highly enriched uranium is not exceptional since the great majority of research reactors functioning throughout the world, and in particular those delivered by the United States, use this kind of combustible. It corresponds only to the requirements of the research reactor supplied, is programmed in consequence and is subject to all necessary safety measures. (17)

*** Iraq vainly calls for a cease-fire**

October 1st, Iraq invited Iran to cease fire from October 5th through 8th. This entreaty followed Baghdad's acceptance of the mission of mediation offered by Mr. Zia-ul-Haq and Mr. Chatti. Iraq laid down the following conditions before the cease-fire could take effect:

- An end to the Iranian attacks against Iraqi forces.
- An end to the concentrations and movements of troops.
- No more reconnaissance flights or propaganda campaigns against Iraq.

On October 2nd, the Iraqi military command announced that military operations would from then on be restricted to the defense of the strategic areas already held. At this same moment, Teheran was proclaiming a general counter-offensive. Fierce combats took place in Arabistan, especially in the regions of Mohammarah, Dezful, al-Ahwaz and Abadan. The Iranian Charge d'Affaires at the United Nations, Mr. Jamal Shemirani, had rejected the Iraqi proposal for a cease-fire, explaining that Teheran would persist in its refusal as long as the Iraqi army had not regained the positions it occupied prior to the war. The Iranian attitude caused Iraq to intensify its attacks so as to oblige its adversaries to sit down at the table of negotiation. Starting on October 3rd, the Iraqi forces applied themselves to the cutting off of all supply routes to Iranian towns.

The cease-fire proposed by Iraq was to go into effect on October 5th, but instead, four Iranian planes carried out a raid over the suburbs of Baghdad, hitting economic and civil targets. It was after this attack that Iraq made known its will to go on fighting against Iran whatever the period of time and the sacrifices required. Iraq had weighed the Iranian acts of refusal of all international resolutions, mediations and appeals to lay down its arms.

The war then entered a new operational stage. The intransigence of Iran progressively discouraged those who had exerted themselves in trying to find a solution to the conflict. The Iraqi Revolution Command Council observed this situation in a long communiqué:

Despite the contempt shown by the Iranian authorities for these good intentions, praised by the Islamic states as well as by international circles known to be friendly; despite the publication of a communiqué signed by Khomeini rejecting the proposal for a cease-fire, the Iraqi government has fully kept its engagements towards the Islamic states and the entire world. In this way, the President of the Republic, Commander-in-Chief of the Iraqi Armed Forces, has given the order to stop all military operations, the cease-fire going into effect October 5th, 1980 at dawn. And, indeed, the Iraqi Armed Forces have scrupulously respected these instructions. However, the government of Teheran has rebuffed this initiative by continuing to this very day its acts of aggression against our armed forces and against Iraqi territory. It is thus that their ground forces triggered aggressions against our armed forces while Iranian aviation and the navy were simultaneously raiding civil sites inside Iraqi territory.

By proclaiming before the entire world that it has faithfully filled its engagements, the Iraqi government demonstrates by words and by acts its good intentions, its solid commitment to principles, its sincere desire to put an end to hostilities in such a way that a just solution can be found, based on the speech pronounced by the President of the Republic, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, on September 28, 1980.

Let it once again be recalled that in this speech, the President of the Republic had announced Iraq's will to decree the stopping of fighting if the other side engaged itself to respect this earnest plea. Moreover, our country is ready to negotiate with the Iranian party in view of finding an honorable and just solution which guarantees our rights and respects our principles. What we demand, the President said, is that the Iranian government recognize outright, both legally and in practice, the legitimate historical rights of Iraq over its territories and its waters; that it commit itself to a true policy of good neighborliness; and that it abandon its racist, aggressive and expansionist tendencies as well as its spiteful attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of the countries in the region.

Lastly, the Iranian Government must restore all lands spoiled from our native land and present a clear idea of its claims and of its viewpoint as to the rights of Iraq and the Arab Nation. Yet, the behavior of the Iranian authorities confirms what we have always said about the expansionist aims of a regime whose irresponsibility towards its peoples is equaled only by its contempt for the rest of the world. We are convinced that the only effective means to bring these authorities to reason is to strike them painful blows so as to oblige them to recognize law and reality.

Conscious of its responsibility with regard to the region and the world, and respecting the parties having generated these good initiatives, Iraq is firmly decided to pursue its just and honorable struggle for its legitimate historical rights.

*** Iran's isolation and the Iraqi diplomatic campaign**

President Bani Sadr complained about the isolation of Iran from the rest of the international community: "We should not ignore what is said of us throughout the world. We are isolated because international public opinion has judged our actions as unrightfully." This declaration translates the internal dissension, the divergences of viewpoints and the contradictions between what the Iranian leaders say and what they do.

Considering the absence of any cohesion within the Iranian political leadership, the Iraqi authorities launched an enormous diplomatic campaign, the echo of which was amplified by the internal unity reigning in Iraq. President Saddam Hussein had messages transmitted to twenty seven states, defining the position of Baghdad and recalling its proposal for a peaceful settlement to the conflict. Mr. Naim Haddad, President of the National Assembly and member of the R.C.C., undertook a tour of the Eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Poland, East Germany and Hungary). Mr. Abdel Fattah Mohammed Amin, member of the R.C.C. and Minister of the Regional Administration, also went on a tour of several countries in Western Europe (Italy, Austria, West Germany, Spain and Sweden). Mr. Kassem Mohammed Khalaf, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, visited India, Indonesia, Sri-Lanka, Bangladesh, China and Japan. Mr. Hashem Hassan Aqrabi, State Minister, went to Nigeria, Senegal, Mali, Madagascar, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Kenya. Mr. Karim Mahmoud Hussein, Youth Minister, met with the Turkish and Greek authorities. Mr. Hikmat Ibrahim, member of the Revolutionary Council, left for Belgrade just a few days later, while Mr. Abdel Wahab Mahmoud, Minister of Agriculture, departed for South America.

*** Crossing the Karun**

At the same time as the Iraqi Special Forces were just finishing besieging Mohammarah, on the night of October 10th, a detachment from the Iraqi army was continuing its advance over the Al-Ahwaz route, before heading toward the south along a line parallel to the Shatt-al-Arab. This maneuver was the prelude to the most noteworthy military operation of the war.

Iraqi tanks succeeded in forcing their way through the 9 m. separating the al-Mohammarah-al-Ahwaz route from the banks of the Karun. This river crosses the southern part of Mohammarah before emptying into the Shatt-al-Arab, and therefore constitutes the northern extremity of the Island of Abadan. During the night the Iraqi tanks moved ahead until they finally reached the Karun. Crossing it a 310 yard long floating bridge was set up in order to permit the tanks to take up positions on the opposite bank before sunrise. Both the observers and the military correspondents estimated that this could be thought of as one of the most skillful maneuvers of modern warfare. In the

morning, the Iraqi forces surprise attacked the Iranian units to be found on the al-Ahwaz-Abadan route. They took numerous prisoners and seized a considerable amount of weapons and heavy material, namely, British-made Chieftain tanks, American M-60's and 175 mm., recoilless guns from the same origin (these guns achieved notoriety when "Israel" used them against Egypt under President Nasser during the 1968-1969 war of attrition). This material was in perfect condition and was carried by the Iranian prisoners themselves towards Basra behind the Iraqi lines, once again making use of the floating bridge to cross back over the Karun.

The Iraqis were trained on this material and then made rapid use of it against the Iranian forces, as mentioned by the Iraqi military communiqués published in December, 1980. Part of the Iranian armament was exhibited in Zawra Park in Baghdad. Furthermore, 50 tanks were given to Jordan.

Crossing the Karun allowed the Iraqis to completely surround Abadan Island to the east, north and west, and to take control of all roadways connecting the Abadan refineries to the rest of Iran. During this operation, a great number of Iranians were taken prisoner, and among them, Mr. Mohammed Jawad Tandkuyan, Petroleum Minister, captured on October 31st. In addition, the Iraqi forces destroyed the oil pipelines between the refinery of Abadan and al-Ahwaz. They also blew up the strategic pipelines buried 3.3 yards underground.

*** The fall of al-Mohammarah**

The communiqués emitted by both sides give dates for the fall of Mohammarah that contradict those of the press releases. These divergences may be explained by the complex topography of this city, which extends around 3 3/4 m. in length and 2 1/2 m. in width. The city is divided into five large sections: A huge, modern port upon the Shatt-al-Arab, bordered by the old city to the north and the new city to the east. The Island of Abadan makes up the southern section, that is, the opposite bank of the Karun. To the northeast, a group of military buildings and barracks form the fifth section.

This structure explains why the takeover of Mohammarah was achieved in several stages. The first phase ended in the occupation of the port by Iraqi forces. The final "mopping-up" went on during and after the crossing of the Karun, and the most ferocious fighting occurred at this time, in each and every street. The Iraqi Special Forces demonstrated their ability to engage in street combat.

In the speech that he addressed to the Iraqi soldiers on October 18, 1980, on the eve of the feast of Al-Adha, President Saddam Hussein cited these battles as an example:

You, my brothers who are fighting and wrenching the land of al-Mohammarah free from the enemy, you are paying with your blood each inch won over from the enemy. By your

combat, you are writing a page of history as you edify the past, present and future of your nation. You are struggling for the reawakening of the Arabs.

On November 8, 1980, the Iraqi newspapers devoted their headlines to what they called "the final touch". By this, they were referring to the Iraqi actions in the city of

Mohammarah. That very day, the popular army (18) had finished clearing the barricades, tanks and burning tires left by the Iranians in the main streets of the city. In the meantime, civil technicians were laying telephone lines and assuring the postal and telegraphic services in the city.

The battle for the control of the port made international news due to the considerable number of foreign ships found there, waiting to unload the merchandise imported by Iran. These boats had been stuck for quite a while and ultimately were hit by Iranian fire. The latter forces were trying to put pressure on the Iraqis and get them to stop their advance.

The commander of the Iranian navy announced that his country was going to mine the Strait of Hormuz to prevent any international humanitarian attempts to rescue the crews on the stranded boats. Furthermore, on October 14th, the Iraqi President made it known to Kurt Waldheim that his country had started to evacuate the vessels blocked inside the port of Mohammarah and that Iraq would inform the United Nations of the completion of this operation. Additionally, a director of the Iraqi General Company of Ports indicated that the states to which these ships belonged had been informed of the steps taken by Baghdad. He added that four boats belonging to Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy and South Korea had been directed to the port of Basra. (19)

The "mopping-up" of Mohammarah and the crossing of the Karun completed the Iraqi victory that had by then become undeniable. Eye witnesses visited this region during the first two weeks of November. They traveled all along the front from Qasr-e-Shirin in the north to Abadan in the south, passing by the regions of Bostan (Bsytin) and Khafajiyah. Their testimonies confirmed that the Iraqi army controlled an entire region "stretching 13-17 miles inside Iran along a 350 mile front." (20)

While the Iraqi army was pursuing its advance on all fronts, the popular army was assuring the defense of those cities and complexes liberated, for example, Mohammarah, Qasr-e-Shirin, as well as the villages of the Bostan region. The civilian groups for popular action undertook the marking out of roads and the construction of dams. The above-mentioned witnesses described Iraqi society at war as a machine whose parts are well lubricated: each individual has an assigned task that he fulfills with total abnegation.

THE SECRET OF THE IRAQI SUCCESSES

In his press conference held in Baghdad on November 10, 1980, the Iraqi president emphasized the high level of consciousness attained by the Iraqi people during the war.

*** We consider the wars of 1956, 1967 and 1973 as our own experiences.**

The experience of the Arabs in the war involving Syria, Jordan and Egypt in 1967 is our own, and that of October 1973 led by Syria and Egypt on the front lines, with all of their military potential against the Zionist entity, is again our experience as Arabs.

All these wars are full of lessons rich in both positive and negative aspects. The element of surprise by our enemy does not allow us to justify the possibility of losing the battle, nor does the fact that their mobilization within five days instead of over a week had temporarily thrown us off. It would in no way excuse us not to have minutely calculated everything, just as we cannot use the excuse that our stocks were sufficient for two months, whereas the war may be prolonged to over four months.

The longest contemporary war

That is why we may declare in all frankness and sincerity that we are satisfied with our calculations in front of our new enemy who imposed this war upon us and that we have accepted. Our calculations are still right, and what is more, the positive elements which have arisen in our favor at the Arab, international and Iraqi levels, as well as the technical aspects, among others, have revealed themselves even more auspicious than those considered when we took the decision for confrontation.

You may say that this is the vague language already heard from other people. But I ask you this: What duration are you speaking about? The war has lasted over two months. This is the longest armed conflict between two countries in the history of modern wars, with the exception of wars of independence which have a different nature and meaning. We have already been fighting two months. Notwithstanding the ultra-sophisticated arsenal that the United States of America and other countries have stored in Iran, the military plans in its possession today, as well as the experience acquired by that country prior to the fall of the Shah thanks to the CENTO pact, we have succeeded in fighting them for two months, improving our military positions and progressing.

An Iraqi Arab strategy

It has been said that this progression is slow. In the beginning you called it rapid, at least some of you during the first week. It has been said that the Iraqis had thrown themselves into a war without having taken any precautions with regard to their means of communication, and without having sufficiently weighed the defensive measures that the enemy would take. Then you, or some of you at least, started to criticize us for our

slowness, declaring that either our tactics were inspired by those of the Soviet Union or that they were of Western or Oriental inspiration. As for myself, I would say that their inspiration is solely due to the Iraqi Arab strategy. They derive from the lessons we have learned, lessons that are common to all Arabs, even to those who today manifest their ill-will. The latter have obliged us to calculate precisely by accounting for their possible dealings. Thus, we were not surprised by them; what did surprise us, however, was the support of so many well-intentioned people at the international and Arab levels, who demonstrated more support than could have been hoped for. When it must confront a situation, the calculations of our country with regard to its men, its institutions, its people and its leaders, or other aspects, take the worst eventualities into consideration. The same information media had predicted our failure at the time the March 1970 Manifesto was proclaimed. But we did not fail. They believed that Iraq had launched itself into a tremendous adventure and that it was taking the risk of division. But on the contrary, the unity of Iraq was reinforced. These same circles had also forecast our failure at the time of nationalization, saying that we had gotten ourselves involved in a foolish adventure. But we have succeeded. Not content with that, they dreamed of the appearance of a conflict between civilians and military, but its dream was not to come true. The same milieu predicted we would fail in the war against the rebel factions in 1974, a war that lasted 12 months. We have won a victory and their forecast proved false.

It is again those sources which, not having received central instructions from Zionist circles, remained silent during the first week of the war. As we ourselves had foreseen, they were taken by surprise. As soon as they had received instructions from the Zionists, in particular, and others who wish neither the victory of Iraq nor the development of the Arab Nation, they went on the offensive. That is exactly what happened.

I am not speaking of those among you who are asking questions. On the contrary, we have always said that we were grateful to those who question us because discussion and concerted action are the indispensable ways and means for reaching the truth. But we resent those who know this truth and elude it by avoiding to speak of the matter.

Mobilization of the Iraqi people

So try to pass through the Abadan-al-Mohammarah, al-Mohammarah-al-Ahwaz or al-Mohammarah-Dezful sectors, you will see dozens of miles of paved roads. This work was carried out not by Iraqi soldiers, but by Iraq. It is the Iraqi civilian organizations that did this on the army's back lines, since everyone fights in their own way in Iraq. The engineer, the officer, the soldier, the popular army, the drivers of bulldozers and tractors, the peasant, the artist, the writer, the man of letters and the journalist, each one in his own area. The Iraqi children that you can see accomplishing their duty in the field of civil defense also had the honor of participating in the battle. You will see dozens of miles of road laid out behind the army, conceived in accounting for winter and possible upheavals due to the will of man or to natural elements that could happen to the Dez Dam or to the al-Karkheh River after the winter rains.

The war started on September 4th. The Iranian enemy launched it against our people and against our country. In the month of September, it was not yet winter. One week to ten days after September 22nd, as soon as our ground forces entered Iranian territory and the fighting took on a new and larger dimension, we began laying out roads in order to link the paved ones to the centers of command of the Iraqi army fighting at Dezful, al-Ahwaz, al-Mohammarah, Abadan, Qasr-e-Shirin, Mehran and other zones. Perhaps you would say: Look at these people from the Third World countries... They are never capable of calculating as do the great powers, nor as those who know science and how to manipulate it. Perhaps you would say: Oh! The Arabs! Surely the Zionist entity and its sympathizers say: Look at the Arabs! They have not thought of the winter... They have not taken the dam on the Dez into account nor the other Iranian rivers that may possibly undergo violent changes due to nature or to the Iranians.

Perhaps you will say, now that we have told you how we improved the roads: the Iraqis therefore want to settle in rather than to leave these territories. But we shall answer by stating that our behavior is constantly inspired by this noble saying: 'For your life on earth act as if you were going to live forever, and for life-after-death, act as if you were going to die tomorrow'. Our mothers and children would never pardon us for neglecting to take the steps necessary to face winter and its rigors.

IRAN AT THE U.N.: RADJAI'S SPEECH

The Iranian Prime Minister's visit to New York on October 17th astonished diplomatic circles. Mr. Rajai was going to the United Nations to expose the Iranian point of view. His trip was aimed at breaking out of Teheran's isolation.

The same day that Mr. Rajai arrived in New York, the Iraqi president was meeting with Mr. Habib Chatti, Secretary General of the Conference of Islamic Nations, and reconfirmed to him that Iraq was ready to accept an immediate cease-fire and to open negotiations based on the respect of Iraqi rights and notably upon the sovereignty of Baghdad over its lands and its territorial waters. The visit of the Iranian Prime Minister only served to reflect the "embarrassment" of Teheran over a war that was still going on with Iraq. (21)

Prior to the meeting between Rajai and Waldheim, the latter had received a message from General Zia-ul-Haq, President of the Conference of Islamic Nations, which contained a proposal for a three-day cease-fire to take effect Saturday, in the evening of October 18th, for the feast of Al-Adha. Iraq accepted this proposal but Mr. Rajai turned it down during a press conference held in New York on October 18, 1980.

On October 17th, the Iranian Prime Minister gave an hour-and-a-half speech in front of the Security Council. He explained Iran's position at the same time as he attacked Arab nationalism: "The Super Powers want to create a new Israel in the Middle East, under the colors of Arab nationalism". He also criticized the use of Soviet arms by the Iraqis,

recalling "the Soviet aggression against Afghanistan" before evoking "the Soviet arms arriving to Aqaba on their way to Iraq". The remainder of the Iranian Prime Minister's intervention was limited to insults against Iraq and its leaders, before concluding somewhat paradoxically: "We are not here to ask for anything whatsoever from the Security Council." (22)

THE IRAQI THESIS

During the October 15th session devoted to the Iraq-Iran conflict, Dr. Saadoun Hammadi was the first to speak before the Security Council. After having laid out the Iraqi point of view in detail and after presenting a record of the relations between the two countries since the return of Khomeini to Teheran, he concluded:

Iraq does not stand for war, nor does it believe in the use of force in international relations. Iraq, as its record proves, and particularly so in its frontier relations with Iran, has always adhered strictly and honorably to the letter and spirit of its international commitments. But at the same time, Iraq does not accept any form of threat or aggression against its sovereignty and dignity, and we are ready to make all the sacrifices necessary for the preservation of our legitimate rights and vital interests.

Concern has been expressed regarding the repercussions of the recent events on the world economic interests which might be adversely affected. Let me point out at once that Iraq is keen to protect within its ability the economic interests of other nations. So any attempt to widen the character and scope of our problem with Iran would endanger the situation. Such an attitude would invite further foreign intervention in our part of the world which we earnestly want to keep outside the sphere of influence and rivalry of the Big Powers, in the interest of international peace and security, and world economic prosperity.

It is well known to the Council and the international community as a whole that Iraq has responded favorably and positively to the various calls addressed to it and the efforts made to stop the fighting and move towards a peaceful settlement of the present conflict. We have cooperated with the Security Council from the outset and have participated in its deliberations. Our response to this Council's resolution no. 479 of September 28, 1980 was prompt and positive; our President informed the Secretary-General (document S/14203 of September 20, 1980) that... 'we naturally accept the above-mentioned resolution... and declare our readiness to abide by it if the Iranian side does likewise', and that 'we hope that the Security Council will take the necessary measures to urge the Iranian side to abide by that resolution'. (23)

Iran, Mr. President, officially rejected the call of the Council. Moreover, in response to the goodwill mission undertaken by the President of Pakistan and the Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference we offered a unilateral cease-fire from October 5-8, which actually went into effect at dawn on October 5th. Iran's response was a large-scale attack on land, sea and in the air.

I should finally like to reaffirm before the Council that Iraq does not stand for the use of force in international relations. We firmly believe in the peaceful settlement of disputes. We fully realize that, as a developing country, we need to utilize all our energies and resources for social and economic development. But at the same time we cannot stand idle against any encroachment upon our legitimate sovereign rights in our total territories, security, peace and well-being. (24)

*** Where are Iran's boundaries?**

When the members of the Security Council evoked the possibility of an Iraqi retreat and especially the American declarations, Dr. Saadoun Hammadi addressed messages to the Foreign Affairs Ministers of its member states. These notes reflected Iraq's genuine desire to find a final solution to the conflict. Iraq was reaffirming that it had no designs on Iranian territories, but that it would not give up its legitimate rights over its own territory as well as absolute sovereignty over the Shatt-al-Arab.

According to Dr. Hammadi, to propose an eventual Iraqi retreat is not realistic for three reasons:

1 - The unique borderline agreement between Iraq and Iran is that of 1913. The 1975 agreement was implicitly abrogated by Iran, after which Iraq did the same. The agreement of 1937 had been unilaterally nullified by the Shah.

So what must be the extent of an eventual Iraqi retreat? On this point, the content of Dr. Hammadi's messages was explained by President Saddam Hussein during his November 10, 1980 press conference:

Our rights are clear, our territory is clearly defined, as well as our sovereignty over the usurped Arab territories. The Iranian territory is equally well defined. What we demand is that Khomeini tells us precisely, which are the geographic boundaries of Iran, an initiative which up to now he has not wanted to take. Ask him this question and you'll see that he won't tell you where those boundaries are to be found. Then you will understand how much of an expansionist Khomeini is.

Ask the Iranian leaders where exactly their land and sea borders with Iraq and the Arab countries of the Gulf are located. You will see how they evade the question, for they want to expand to the detriment of the Arabs.

2 - After all this has happened, how can anyone imagine a retreat of the Iraqi armed forces? How can one guarantee that Iran will not then undertake a war against Iraq and occupy its territories? If we want to be realistic in speaking of a retreat, that is, an outcome representing a definitive solution to the conflict, the legitimate claims of Iraq must be considered, as well as giving guarantees that would avoid a new outbreak of fighting.

3 - Iraq seeks peace with Iran along with that between Iran and the other Arab countries. "We want final and precise boundaries and we intend to obtain respect of the principle of non-interference of a country in the internal affairs of any other", concluded Mr. Hammadi.

*** Project for a conclusive peace**

It was in this setting and in response to questions raised by journalists during the press conference referred to above that President Saddam Hussein explained his concept of a conclusive peace and the normalization of Iraqi-Iranian relations:

We have spoken more than once of the criteria that we think would guarantee good relations or normal relations between Iran and us, as Iraqis and as Arabs.

Indeed, I can briefly recall the essential elements:

- that they respect our rights and that we respect theirs;
- that illegitimate rights not be imposed on us by force;
- that we respect their security and that they respect ours;
- that we respect their sovereignty and that they respect ours;
- and that we respect the path that they have chosen and that they respect the one adopted by us.

As to whether we prefer bilateral or territorial guarantees under the auspices of the Islamic Conference or other international instances, well, the only guarantee is that we agree among ourselves and that there be mutual respect for our rights, besides the fact that Iran must respect Arab rights, and the Arabs those of Iran. If we learn that this is not possible, we will envisage other, broader guarantees.

WHAT IS ARABISTAN'S FUTURE?

On the occasion of the 11th Arab Summit in Amman, President Saddam Hussein elucidated the Iraqi viewpoint concerning the future of Arabistan during a press conference held on November 27, 1980 in the presence of Emir Hassan, Crown Prince of Jordan:

It is up to the people of Arabistan, as with the other peoples of Iran, to decide upon their own fate. From then on, speaking of this question without accounting for the will of the peoples in the region would constitute an encroachment upon this will.

In a previously cited interview with President Hussein published in the Kuwaiti newspaper "Al Anba" (25), the following dialogue was reported to have taken place:

Q - Are you going to demand the creation of an autonomous government for the Arab citizens of the region of Arabistan as one of the conditions for a ceasefire?

THE PRESIDENT - Regarding this problem, our position is in fact identical whatever country is involved. The Kurdish minority in Iraq has actually obtained an autonomous government, which is understandable. In Iran, five different ethnic groups coexist. If circumstances permit the Iranian minorities to govern themselves in one way or another, we agree. We are prepared to offer our support in such a case, which is in full concordance with our convictions and our policies. However, it is not right that we Iraqis make such proposals in place of the Iranian ethnic communities.

Q - Why don't you make this gesture anyway, for the people of Arabistan and you are both Arab?

THE PRESIDENT - Up till now we have not regarded the situation created by the state of war, but we have adopted a general position on this issue instead. It is natural that we offer our assistance to the Arab brothers living there, especially against an enemy state with which we are still in war. We uphold any people who is seeking to obtain its rights as well as to decide upon its own future.

Q - Why hasn't Iraq conquered Abadan when it is militarily capable of doing so ?

THE PRESIDENT - In the conflict with Iran, our principle has been to avoid carrying on a war of conquest. If we have extended the fighting into Iranian territory, it is to protect our own cities from danger and to keep our people safe from the Iranian bombs, raids and terrorism that they have already exposed us to. We also want to regain our rights usurped by Iran. If we know that a given military operation, for instance, the takeover of a city, would lead us closer to this objective, then we would go ahead with it. On the contrary, if we can practically attain the same objective without necessarily proceeding to an operation of conquest, then we shall not do it. I do not exclude the possibility of conquest nor of military occupation, but I contend that the general situation is defined by factors which are not wholly military in nature.

In a series of articles published in Paris in the "Al-Watan al Arabi" review under the title "The Iraq-Ira-Iran Conflict", Iraqi Deputy Premier, Tareq Aziz writes:

With respect to Arabistan, it is not logical nor appropriate to raise the question while the Arab situation is not yet ready for it, and neither are the Arabs of Arabistan sufficiently

prepared for it themselves, even though it is they who are primarily concerned by the problem. In any case, Iraq is the firmest advocate of their cause. (26)

Speaking on March 14, 1981 before a fresh batch of Iraqi Popular Army fighters on their way to the battle front, President Saddam Hussein declared what observers considered to be a step ahead regarding the question of Arabistan:

Our people in Arabistan should prepare themselves to exercise legitimate national rights over their territories and to play their role as a people having possessed its own characteristics throughout history and at present having all the prerequisites to establish themselves nationally. (27)

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The war is now entering into a new phase. The counter-offensive launched under the direction of Iranian President Abul Hassan Bani Sadr in early 1981 has ended up in the destruction of the Iranian tank forces. Observers have described this event as one of the biggest tank battles in modern warfare. In Iran, internal struggles were never more fierce, as shown by the scathing accusations exchanged by the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister, the latter blaming Bani Sadr for the total failure of the counteroffensive. The religious leaders themselves have become aware of the defeat that Iran has suffered. Iraq, in the meanwhile, has gradually been improving and consolidating its military positions, as it extended its territorial control along the front.

At the same time, United Nations delegate Olaf Palme was carrying out his second visit to Baghdad and Teheran. He returned to New York more optimistic than after his first visit in mid-November 1980. At the end of January 1981, the Islamic Summit was held in Taif (Saudi Arabia). But in spite of the numerous appeals made by the Muslim heads of state, Iran refused to take part in it.

At the Summit of Taif a cease-fire between Iraq and Iran was requested in addition to a nine-state committee being created under the name of the "Reconciliation Committee", designed to seek a solution to the conflict. In his speech (28) before the C.I.N., which groups 42 states, President Saddam Hussein affirmed that the chances of restoring peace were still alive, "if we trust in law and reason, without hate or fanaticism". (29)

Further attempts were made to convince Iran to negotiate by the Foreign Affairs Ministers during the Conference of Nonaligned Countries, meeting in New Delhi from February 9-13, 1981, but these too proved to be unsuccessful due to the unacceptable conditions set by Teheran for the opening of such talks. This attitude sharply contrasts with that of the Iraqi leaders who during this same conference declared that they would listen to any proposal for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

On the last day of February 1981, the Islamic Goodwill Mission arrived in Teheran headed by Ahmed Sekou Toure, President of the Republic of Guinea, and having as members President Zia-ul-Haq, of Pakistan, President Zia-ur-Rahman of Bangladesh, President Dawoodo Gaware of Gambia, the Turkish Prime Minister, Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Foreign Ministers of Malaysia and Senegal, as well as Mr. Habib Chatti, Secretary General of the Islamic Conference. The Mission was received at the airport by Bani Sadr himself, and then by Khomeini, who received them at his home in Teheran and who reprimanded the Taif conference for having listened to President Saddam Hussein's 80-minute expose of the Iraqi point of view. In a 5-hour meeting with the Mission, attended by members of the Iranian Defense Council, President Bani Sadr reviewed "the conditions Iran considered necessary for peace". All observers agreed that the declarations of the Iranian officials on the task of the Mission were "mostly intended for internal consumption, rather than to solve the conflict" (30).

The Islamic Goodwill Mission arrived in Baghdad in the evening of March 4th, and was accorded an official welcome headed by President Saddam Hussein. Talks between the Iraqi side and the Mission started less than an hour later. Heading the Iraqi party, President Hussein affirmed that "any solution which does not take the reasons behind the war into consideration, including Iraq's full sovereignty over Shatt-al-Arab and its lands, cannot be a just and logical one. Any withdrawal before Iran's recognition of these rights, as well as their providing practical and legal guarantees to Iraq, cannot be materialized. The President also stressed that Iraq fully adheres to what it has announced and to the Islamic Conference's resolutions, namely, stopping the fighting and conducting negotiations to reach an agreement ensuring the legitimate rights of both parties under the auspices of the Goodwill Mission". (31)

The Goodwill Mission paid a second visit to both capitals and made some proposals for a peaceful solution. Iran hastily turned them down before any Iraqi commen-tary could be made.

The Nonaligned countries also made a new initiative and named a special committee with the same aim. After meeting in Geneva, this committee left for Beirut, where they consulted with Yasser Arafat. After these consulta-tions the committee did not pay visits to either Baghdad or Teheran, perhaps due to a belief that circumstances were not yet ripe for this mediation, or to their desire to give the Islamic Goodwill Mission a chance to follow up on its initiative.

Hence, the Iranian position is clear: Khomeini rejects negotiation and conciliation of any kind at a moment when Iran is facing interior dissension and a ferocious power struggle between its various political factions, in addition to the growing clamor of its ethnic and national groups for autonomy. This situation has obliged Khomeini to name a permanent committee to conciliate these different groups, including a representative of both the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister. The question that arises is the following: how can a leader who is unable to reconcile his own contradictions be expected to find reconciliation with others? On the other hand, the Iraqi position firmly

adheres to the defense of its sovereignty and national rights, and the more bloodshed there will be, the more extensive its demands.

While evoking Iran's disintegration during the precited speech to Iraqi Popular Army soldiers on March 14th, President Saddam Hussein committed himself to helping the different peoples of that country: "Bani Sadr is surprised and so is his master Khomeini, how Iraq is fighting with such determination for the seventh month running, while the population of Iran is three times that of Iraq. The longer the fighting goes on the greater our determination, and the more rights merited". The President added that Iraq is ready to offer all moral and material assistance to the Iranian peoples of Kurdistan, Baluchstan, Azerbaijan, as well as to all honorable citizens to live in honor and peace, so as to establish neighborly relations with Iraq. He then said that "Iranian rulers are disintegrating while we in Iraq are intensifying our unity; they are standing on the brink of collapse while we are firm in our positions. The Iranian peoples are living in despair, poverty and humiliation, while our people are living in prosperity and stability... We never wished to see Iran dismembered. We wanted Iran to be a neighborly country, capable of resolving all its problems and maintaining its integrity, but from now on, we shall not anticipate this wish because a country harboring enmity to the Arab nation and to Iraq ought to deteriorate and disintegrate. This is our strategy, which we have disclosed since a long time". (31)

In the future, will the various attempts to put an end to the war triumph, or shall we be spectators to a fresh out-burst of fighting? In the latter case, will it be an all-out war or will it be on a more limited scale, taking the form of a war of attrition? Finally, will the internal troubles known to exist in Iran be resolved so as to permit a responsible leadership to take over and to head Iran toward dialogue and toward a just and lasting peace?

CONCLUSION

As this study comes to an end, it would appear that the Arab-Persian conflict finds its roots in history, even from the pre-Islamic period. Whatever form it has tended to take, the nature of the antagonism between Arabs and Persians has a perennial aspect. Bearing in mind the historical context, the following remarks can be made:

- 1) The region of Shatt-al-Arab, including Arabistan and the other lands in question, is Arab due to its geographical and historical background, its economy, its nationality and its culture. The Arab character of this area has been legally recognized by international treaties concluded throughout its history.
- 2) The dominion of the Arabs over these territories is intimately linked to their history and to their extremely close relations with Iraq. Western travelers have testified to the fact: "This region is as different from Iran as Germany is from Spain." (32) It is for that reason that "even if Iraq and this region have known different destinies imposed by the

course of history at certain times and over very brief periods, their peoples share the same national identity; one part of this area was always incorporated in Iraq and was in permanent contact with its inhabitants. It underwent all the external influences that Iraq was subjected to." (33)

3) An economic unity undeniably exists between the two banks of the Shatt-al-Arab, which belong to the same agricultural and climatic family: "It was discovered that both banks were rich in 'black gold' at a period when the Iranian substratum was believed to be diminishing. This pushed the Europeans into occupying Arabistan in addition to Iraq, considering this region to be extremely advantageous for commercial and industrial exploitation". (34)

4) A cultural whole is represented in the fields of language, customs, traditions, sciences, art and literature.

Hence, the population of this region is different from the Persians on the cultural plane. Ethnically, it is composed of "immigrant Arabs, part of the Arabs of Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula, all descendants or natives of these countries. They speak the same language as the Arabs and possess the same customs. Their love of freedom is as vivid as that of their brothers in the desert... They were convinced of the impossibility for the Persians to settle on the coast, thus exposing themselves to the invasions of the Arabs, who spent their lives on the seas". (35)

5) Throughout their history, the Persians have demonstrated racist tendencies: "They have since long ago tried in vain to destroy the Arab entity and its power in Arabistan, due to their extreme hatred for the Arabs and their historical tendency to aggress all people who are not Persian". (36)

These quotations are evidence that this region has always been a political and cultural battleground between the Arabs and the Persians.

Despite its origins in the historical conflict opposing these two countries, the Iraq-Iran war has its own particular dynamics. In this respect, the following elements can be discerned:

1) The war broke out following an Iranian attack against Iraq and due to the declared intentions of Khomeini to provoke internal problems and civil war in Iraq. In retaliating, Iraq thus purely and simply practiced its right to self-defense.

2) We must constantly keep in mind one basic truth, that is, the masses were mobilized in Iran so as to put an end to the Shah's power. This goal was reached and represents a tremendous success for the Iranian people. However, this war against Iraq and Teheran's campaign of hatred against the Iraqi leaders can hardly stir the enthusiasm of the Iranians. The latter are chiefly interested in the reconstruction of the country and by the solutions that must be sought for the many problems poisoning their daily lives. The anti-Iraq

hostility would seem to emanate from Khomeini's state of mind; it is for this reason that it cannot be eternal.

3) The Iranians counted on a split in the internal forces of Iraq, but they lost their bet: this country has confronted the war behind a solid interior front and a unified political leadership.

4) This war is different from all classic warfare between two neighboring countries because its consequences concern the entire Arab world. Even if the conflict is resolved in the near future, it will continue to show an aftermath in different fields in more than one Arab country for years to come.

5) The war has thrust the Middle East into a new phase of its history. It is not easy for the observer to outline all of its consequences. Without any doubt, this war marks a decisive turning point in the history of the region. Just as the times prior to the war displayed specific features, the post-war period will witness the revision of numerous values. This new factor will produce its effects in both inter-Arab relations and the relations between the Arabs and the rest of the world.

The case of Iran is similar: the ordeal it is undergoing as well as the crisis it is living through will bring about a reaction from the population such that the country will extricate itself from the difficulties it knows today. The interest of the Iranian people, after having suffered through long years of oppression and injustice, is hardly to pursue with arms and an identical frame of mind the external politics of the Shah, characterized by aggression, expansionism and domination over the Arab neighbors.

This war will help the Iranian people to discover the sharp reality and true meaning of events. These new truths issued from the war will be forcibly imposed upon Iran, especially among the alive and active forces of that society, hoping to create a solid basis for the revolutionary changes and desiring the edification of a modern, democratic society in which all Iranians would live in an atmosphere of liberty, fraternity and justice, without internal discrimination and without unjustified external conflicts, notably with its Arab neighbors.

Until when?

However true it may be to speak of a historical antagonism between Arabs and Persians, this absolutely does not mean that it must persist in the present and in the future. If we have dwelled upon this aspect, it is in order to explain to those who are foreign to the Middle East the course of events leading up to the war.

The experiences of a great number of peoples prove that peaceful and just solutions based upon mutual understanding constitute the best way to put an end to conflict. On the contrary, experience also proves that partial solutions do not lead to peace, but quite often

become the detonator or catalyzer of future confrontations. Such precedents as Alsace-Lorraine, well known to all, need not be recalled here in order to demonstrate the correctness of our conclusions, reached after thorough research. The Iraq-Iran war is in itself an exemplary case.

Notes

(1) Le Monde, September 30, 1980.

(2) (2) Le Monde, September 30, 1980.

(3) An-Nahar, September 29, 1980.

(4) An-Nahar, September 28, 1980.

(5) An-Nahar, October 1, 1980.

(6) An-Nahar, September 28, 1980.

(7) As-Safir, September 28, 1980.

(8) An-Nahar, October 3, 1980.

(9) Le Monde, October 1, 1980.

(10) Article 6 of that treaty stipulates that:

"In the case in which a third power would try to pursue a policy of usurpation by armed intervention in Persia, or would like to use the Persian territory as a base for operations against Russia, and in the case where a foreigner would threaten the boundaries of Russia or its allies, a threat that the Persian government would not be able to stave off after a preliminary warning by Russia, the latter would have the right to advance its troops into the country in view of military operations necessary for its defense. However, Russia promises to withdraw its troops from Persian territory as soon as the peril is averted."

(11) Le Monde, October 1 and 3, 1980. Cf. text of this letter in Appendix XIV (p. 265).

(12) Le Monde, October 30, 1980.

(13) Ath-Thawra (Baghdad), September 28, 1980.

(14) Cf. For example, L'Express and Le Monde, October 4, 1980.

(15) Annexed to the present work (Appendix XV), an excerpt can be found from an article by Israeli Political Science professor, Shlomo Aronson, on "The nuclear factor in the Middle East". This article reveals the confusion which surrounds the raid on the Iraqi nuclear generators.

(16) Al-Anba', January 19, 1981.

(17) Cf. Official Journal of the French Republic,

September 24, 1980 and Le Monde,

September 26, 1980.

(18) The popular army is a paramilitary formation composed of civilians. It groups together very well trained youths, workers and peasants. Their mission in wartime is to defend strategic institutions and, if necessary, to participate in the fighting.

35,000 members of this army took part in the war against Iran. Mr. Taha Yassin Ramadan, member of the R.C.C. and First Deputy Premier, is the commander of the popular army.

(19) An-Nahar, October 15, 1980.

(20) Press conference of President Saddam Hussein on November 10, 1980.

(21) Le Monde, October 17, 1980.

(22) Cf. U.N.O., S/PV 2251, p. 21.

Note: In a statement to the Lebanese weekly Al-Hawadess N° 1271 of March 13, 1981, published in London, the Iraqi Minister of Defense Adnan Khairallah declared that "Honestly speaking, we have not received a single bullet from the Soviet Union since the beginning of

the war until now."

(23) Cf. United Nations, S/14203, p. 2.

(24) Cf. Integral text of the speech in Appendix XVI (p. 271).

(25) January 19, 1981.

(26) Al-Watan al Arabi, January 22, 1981.

(27) Baghdad Observer, March 15, 1981.

(28) Summary of a speech given by President Saddam Hussein at the Islamic Conference in Taif on January 28, 1981 (cf. Appendix XVII, p. 289).

(29) Al-Anwar, January 29, 1981.

(30) An-Nahar, March 2, 1981.

(31) Baghdad Observer, March 15, 1981.

(32) Wilson, Op. Cit., p. 93.

(33) Longrigg, H.S., Four Centuries of Modern Iraq, Oxford, 1925, p. 5.

(34) Hereby, J.J., Op. cit., p. 111.

(35) Berryne J., Op. cit., pp. 166-170.

(36) Wilson, Ibid., p. 136.